

SIX LECTURES
ON SOME
NINETEENTH CENTURY
ARTISTS

WILLIAM KNIGHT

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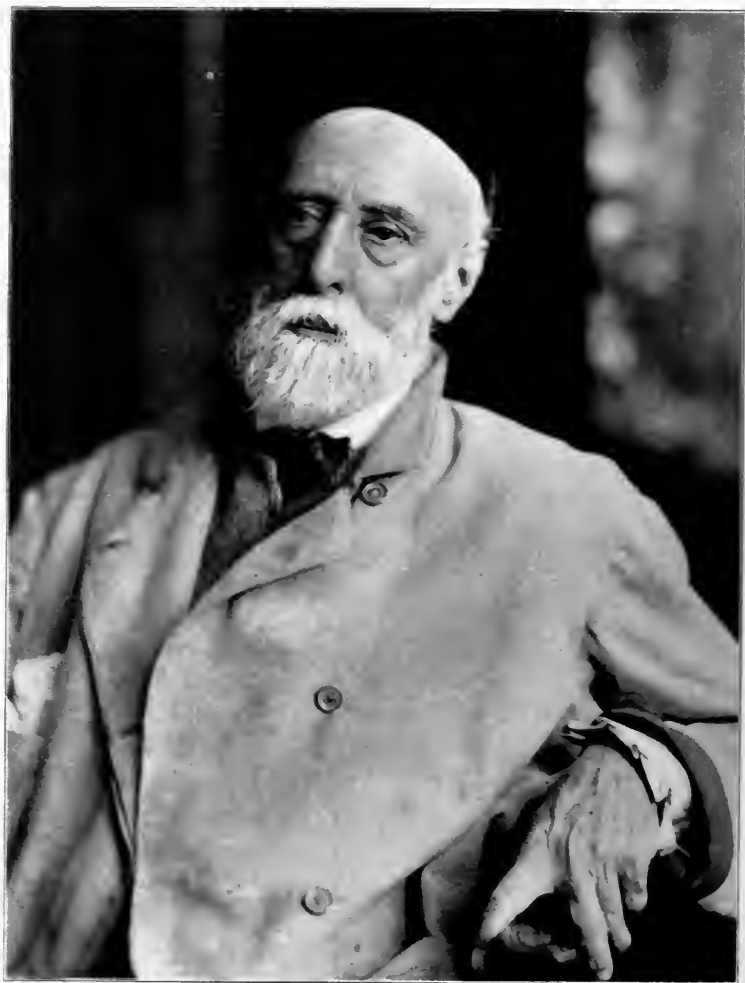
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MISSISSIPPI

THE GREAT
MISSISSIPPI RIVER

SIX LECTURES
ON SOME
NINETEENTH CENTURY ARTISTS



[*Photograph*]

G. F. WATTS, R. A.

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SIX LECTURES ON SOME NINETEENTH CENTURY ARTISTS

ENGLISH AND FRENCH

DELIVERED AT THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

BEING THE
SCAMMON LECTURES
FOR THE YEAR 1907

BY

WILLIAM KNIGHT

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NOTE

THE LECTURES PRESENTED IN THIS VOLUME COMPRISE THE THIRD SERIES DELIVERED AT THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO ON THE SCAMMON FOUNDATION. THE SCAMMON LECTURESHIP IS ESTABLISHED ON AN AMPLE BASIS BY THE BEQUEST OF MRS. MARIA SHELDON SCAMMON, WHO DIED IN 1901. THE WILL PRESCRIBES THAT THESE LECTURES SHALL BE UPON THE HISTORY, THEORY, AND PRACTICE OF THE FINE ARTS (MEANING THEREBY THE GRAPHIC AND PLASTIC ARTS), BY PERSONS OF DISTINCTION OR AUTHORITY ON THE SUBJECT OF WHICH THEY LECTURE, SUCH LECTURES TO BE PRIMARILY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE STUDENTS OF THE ART INSTITUTE, AND SECONDARILY FOR MEMBERS AND OTHER PERSONS. THE LECTURES ARE KNOWN AS "THE SCAMMON LECTURES."



PREFACE.

The following pages contain the Scammon Lectures delivered at Chicago in the spring of 1907, along with one or two *addenda* inserted, which were promised at the conclusion of the course. It was the lecturer's intention to develop them into a larger volume, containing a more complete discussion of the subject; but circumstances have prevented the fulfilment of that desire. Some things have been added which were not spoken. Others have been omitted, because they were more suited for an oral address than for a printed book. Much of the discussion is fragmentary, because the lectures were not intended for advanced scholars or mature art-critics, but rather for students who had not pursued their researches very far.

The delay which has occurred in sending them to press has been due to my wish to add numerous notes and appendices to them; but the demands of a somewhat busy life have called me to other work. I therefore now hand them over to the Director of the Art Institute of Chicago, in the hope that, in their printed form, they may be of use to some of those who heard them delivered, and to others who may chance to read them.

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LECTURE FIRST SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GENIUS OF TURNER



Y aim in this course of Lectures will be in some respects different from that of my accomplished predecessors, as they have been written more with a view to suggest than to teach; and because I wish to open up some pathways not yet familiar to everyone, rather than to traverse those districts of which all students of Art have some knowledge.

The specialty of the group of artists who will come before us, and the abiding charm of their work, is the way in which each—in a different manner—dealt with what I venture to call *ultima* in Art; that is to say, with subjects which the ordinary eye does not see, because they are

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remote from commonplace. The result has been that, whether in landscape or in figure-painting—in their representations of Nature, or of Humanity—they have opened up new pathways for us, suggesting much more than they have disclosed. They have all carried us, more or less, from the real to the ideal; disclosing higher existences, through lower symbols; so that to what is sometimes said in disparagement, or in criticism—"that is not what I ever saw in Nature," or "that is not what the man, or the woman was, when I saw them"—the reply is just, and adequate, "No; it is not what you then saw, but what you might have seen, what Nature was about to disclose to sympathetic souls, but did not to your eye at that particular time; and, in reference to portraiture, you missed what the man or the woman was about to be, what they were in the making, but had not then attained to, and therefore did not manifest at the time to your perception." This is most obvious, because all the moods of Nature, and all the expressions of Humanity, change.

It is impossible to trace out by retrospect all the causes which have led to any great change—whether in artistic, literary, philosophical, scientific or social revivals—in the history of the world;. The threads of influence are so numerous, and their interaction is so very subtle. But the study is a most fascinating one; and while of

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the two subjects which—in response to his kind offer—I suggested to your director that I should take up—viz., I, “The Evolution of Greek Art, in relation to some of its antecedents in the East; and the causes of its rise, decline and fall;” or II, “The Art of Britain from Turner to the Present Day, with a few Continental influences *ab extra*” I chose the latter, as probably the most useful to the audience I might expect in Chicago; both to genuine students of Art, and amateur listeners to lectures upon it. In the course of these lectures I shall have to glance at one or two other than British developments in Europe, especially in France; just as I would have dealt with collateral movements around Hellas in dealing with ancient Greek Art. But it will be mainly to English work that my lectures will be devoted.

After Turner is dealt with, I must speak of Corot, and Jean Francois Millet in France. I shall then return to England and try to trace the evolution of British Art through the influence of Ruskin, and the work of that remarkable Brotherhood known as the Pre-Raphaelites—especially Dante Gabriel Rossetti—and then deal with such masters of English Art as George Frederick Watts, and Edward Burne-Jones, coming down to other workers of great merit and contemporary fame.

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BORN in London, with the Strand for his playground in boyhood, the effect of Turner's upbringing in the mighty city has to be taken into account. One can feel the atmosphere of London in much of his future artistic work, its manifold throbbing life, its alternate light and gloom. Its future expansiveness, and its untroubled sense of mystery, were the outcome of that early London life.

It is hardly necessary now to recall the peculiarities of his youth and adolescence; his uncouthness, his taciturnity, his jealousy, or his ignoble ambition to rival others, who were with him (as Browning puts it) "in the artist list enrolled." It is not too much for his most ardent admirers (of whom I am one) to admit that he was "cabined and confined" within the circle of his own subjective genius, the limits of which he himself knew quite well. He could never have been the member of an artistic brotherhood, even if he had had access to one in his youth. *Camaraderie* was impossible to Turner. If we compare him as a man with his great successors in England—Rossetti, Morris, Burne-Jones and Watts—we find that he always worked in solitude, and tried to keep himself most carefully alone. He would never allow anyone to see him painting, except on one or two memorable occasions; and his strange vagaries, on "varnish-

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ing day" in the Royal Academy, have been recorded by all his biographers. Along with his supreme originality in water-colour, his carelessness as to oil-painting must be recorded, his almost reckless habit of choosing his pigments without care; and leaving his pictures, when finished, stowed away in wet and dusty rooms, seemingly quite careless as to their future fate. I am here as the advocate, and the glorifier, of Turner. I wish to magnify his supremacy in Art, as Ruskin did; but I shall intersperse my eulogy with some qualifying criticism, and with a brief allusion to his career. He inherited a sensuous nature, and he did not bridle his passions; but perhaps he could not have done the artistic work he did, if he had accustomed himself more constantly to the use of the bearing-rein. Who knows? I have tried to follow his career from house to house in London, just as I have followed Wordsworth in his wanderings; but it is not so easy to trace the erratic painter as it is to follow the great poet from first to last. The house in Maiden Lane in which he saw the light of day was an eight-roomed dwelling in a street not squalid at that time. It is now gone, having been taken down in 1821. The boy artist, son of a hairdresser, was not specially well educated; but fairly so for the time, and for his parentage. He wrote both prose and poetry tolerably well in his manhood; but in old age he

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lost the power of clear and accurate composition. This was probably due to the kind of life he led, quite as much as to anything else. I need not refer to his early sketch of the Church at Margate, or to his colouring of engravings before he was eleven years of age. At fifteen he went to the Royal Academy Schools, and also began to work in Sir Joshua Reynolds' house as a privileged copyist. In 1793, when 18 years of age, he left the Academy Schools, and his independence began. In the previous year, however, he commenced his "tours" as a sketcher. And now we find him a youth of keenest observational power, and gigantic memory, of rare imaginative vision, sensitive and sensuous, restless, irritable, proud, defiant, diffuse in his tastes, a knight-errant in art, very ambitious, and curiously reticent because of his knowledge that there was a strain of insanity in his family. He had to create a career for himself, and he did it.

Before him landscape art hardly existed in England. There were topographical sketchers or renderers, but no artists, except Girtin and Wilson. In this direction Turner struck out a line of his own; and his numerous "tours" in Great Britain and France were all undertaken with that end in view, to localize what he saw in plastic art, to memorialize the Landscape, the Cathedrals, Castles, Rivers, Bridges, Ruins, etc. Occasionally, however, his drawings were not

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from Nature, or what he saw before him, but were idealizations of the work of his predecessors. In his tours he was mostly alone, although he sometimes accompanied his young contemporary, Girtin. Had Girtin lived (he died when he was 28) he might have rivalled Turner in water-colour; he had so noble an artistic outlook, and was so completely devoid of jealousy. He was perhaps the most precocious of all English artists, more realistic than Turner, more receptive, less ideal; but not topographic, although minutely true to Nature. He never exaggerated, or invented as Turner did, glorifying the actual by his idealization.

There is no doubt that Turner's debt to others was very slight, and, at its utmost, almost unconscious. He owed a little to Claude Lorrain; but, amongst the greater landscapists of the past, his debt to such men as Salvator Rosa, Poussin, and to Cuyp, was almost nil.

It is easy to follow his career from his early colouring of prints along with Girtin, to his architectural studies; and, when a pupil of the Royal Academy, his being allowed to copy in Sir Joshua Reynolds' studio; and his receiving a commission to take drawings of the places he visited. From the first he was a great pedestrian. He had good health, enjoyed plain living, and could work for fifteen hours a day without fatigue in these early years.

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In 1808 Turner was elected professor of Perspective to the Royal Academy, a post for which he was singularly unfitted. His knowledge of architectural perspective was almost a blank. He held the post for many years, but did no good work in it. It is pleasanter to his admirers to forget that episode, and to turn to his friendship for, and his long residence with, Walter Fawkes, of Farnley Hall in Yorkshire. That friendship was a specially noteworthy circumstance in his career, and in the development of his art. Fawkes was one of Turner's best patrons, and he has the honour of having divined his genius very truly. Turner got to love Wharfedale, and to understand its charm. The same is true, though to a less extent, of his friendship with Lord Egremont at Petworth; and testimony is not lacking that he was at this time a light-hearted, merry creature. One of his friends writes that "his laughter and fun, when an inmate of our cottage, was immeasurable, particularly with the young," while others speak of his cheery companionship in travel.

Turner's artistic departure from the real or actual world was due to his effort to portray a finer kind of Beauty than the actual world disclosed. From his boyhood he never wished to copy Nature, to reproduce it literally; but to glorify it by the creation of a new type or style of Beauty, which he saw ever floating before his

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inward eye, of which the actual world only gives us hints, or broken fragments. The creation of a new type of Beauty thus became the end, or aim, of his art; not an arbitrary selection of fragments, and their combination in a new artificial synthesis; but the production of a fresh unity, compacted by that which every joint of the new fabric supplied. He began by assimilating the work of others, by ambitious acquisitiveness. But, in water-colour, he was an original explorer. He was not the first to work in it, but he designed new methods of work, and re-handled the old ones; and he has had no rival, or equal, in this.

It was more than unfortunate that so great a painter was often stirred up to jealousy, and led into efforts to eclipse other artists; not exactly to dethrone them (he could not do that), but to shew to his contemporaries that he could excel them. Like Abelard, the mediæval sophist, he could not rejoice in a rival's success; and he seemed to find a stimulus to his own work in the effort to surpass that of others. It was a very curious thing, the production of his *Liber Studio-rum*, in rivalry of Claude's *Liber Veritatis*; for Claude's 200 drawings were mere reminiscences of his own pictures, jottings set down to remind him of what he had formerly produced; Turner's were intentional efforts to displace a rival.

But when all is said it remains a historic fact of prime significance that there never was in the

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long evolution of the world's Art so great a landscape-painter as Turner. His was a supremely original genius, almost like that of Shakespeare; or if we come down to contemporaries in kindred arts, like Beethoven in Music, and Wordsworth in the poetry of Nature. In the *Liber Studiorum*, in the *Rivers of France*, in his latest drawings of Venice and the Venetian seaboard, he is absolutely without a rival. But we must raise the farther question: "In what did his greatness specially and distinctively lie?" for vague eulogy is of no use to serious students of Art.

Well; in all the great landscapes of Turner you may have observed that humanity is introduced, just as Wordsworth introduced man into his profoundest poetry of Nature. Almost never in his oils or water-colours, or in the *Liber*, did Turner attempt to draw Nature apart from man. I do not now mean that he threw the spirit of humanity into his nature-pictures, but that he brought living humanity, as Corot did, into his pictures. Perhaps in the very noblest landscape-art man is excluded; that is to say, he is not explicitly or realistically brought in; because the end aimed at is the disclosure of some aspect of the outer Universe surrounding and embracing him, which is—so to say—its secret, its inner soul, its meaning made apparent by an apocalypse; so that all its phases thus revealed are allegories

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typical of man, as in the peace of evening, or the fury of the storm.

But there is more than this. A landscape of the highest class must have unity in it, must be a harmonious whole, not a number of bits of scenery joined together in a random fashion; and if humanity is brought into landscape painting (just as landscape forms the best background to figure-painting), it must be such humanity as befits the place, the time, and the scene. It must be congruous to them, and must never obtrude. If figures occupy too large a space on the canvas, if they catch the eye of the spectator, and detain it from the landscape, they are out of place, and interfere with what the latter has to tell us, or reveal. But observe, it is not meant by this that the great landscape-artist is thinking of artistic unities in the old conventional sense, and that he therefore takes liberties with Nature, bringing into his reproductions of it conventions which are really fictions; for he omits much, as well as introduces much. It is in what he omits that we discover his mastery; and the landscape-harmony which Turner gave us was a blending of the scattered glories of light, the atmosphere of earth and sky, in a fresh unity.

You may note in this connection the mastery of the French artist, Millet,—the underlying humanity of his landscapes, in the *Gleaners*, the *Angelus*, the *Shepherdess*, in the *Girl watching the*

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flight of the geese and listening to their cackle overhead; and later on, I shall compare the two. But let me now quote to you the words of a great modern English landscape artist, Mr. Alfred Hunt, one of the most remarkable of the successors of Turner, who, writing of his master's work in *The Nineteenth Century* (February, 1891), said, "Turner's cows are useful or beautiful chiefly as recipients of sunshine, or types of repose. Their anatomy is of the wildest. They are imperfect parts of a perfect whole. No landscape," Mr. Hunt goes on to say (and I may tell you that my old friend was equally great as a writer and an artist), "no landscape, however simple in subject, quiet in tone, and unrestful in effect, admits (so to speak) of all-round realization; but a poetical landscape-painter is bound to deal with every truth which suits his imaginative purpose, and the moment that light and colour, and that quality of perfect relation between them which we call tone, have become essential to that purpose—then the interdependence of every part, in relation to the whole, and the most delicate pouring out of the most subtle means toward that effect, become vital to him. The power of composition is the landscape painter's special gift. The true look of a bewitching piece of sunlit-distance cannot be given at all, unless the instinct of the artist has worked into his scheme of colour, in some other part of his picture, the very touch of colour (with

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its own relative truth) which can make that distance look both intense and delicate with ethereal light. Colours, textures, masses, shadow, spectacles of light are the notes of his music; the harmonic faculty becomes supreme. The landscapists of the last generation from Turner downwards took this view of their art, and studied Nature in accordance with it. They liked fine bursts of atmospheric effect, and good views with associations of romantic intent, in which to exercise their powers of picturesque arrangement and inventive design. But as 'nothing save genius' could do this, it is now a question whether that mode of regarding Nature is not in danger of passing away from us altogether."

In that same admirable article, Mr. Hunt points out that "with photography and realism" we are now "farther removed from the ideal of Turner than he was from Claude;" and he adds, in an excellent sentence—which is a key to the whole work of the Pre-Raphaelites in landscape Art—that "the aspirant of today will find, however gratefully and reverently he studies the ways and works of famous men who loved nature before him, that *his love is different from theirs, and must be told in its own way.*"

He then goes on to trace a parallel between the work of the imaginative painter and the poet; and he asks a question which can best be put in his own expressive words:

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“In our art of poetical landscape-painting, so far as the stir and passion of nature are concerned, is there any set group or kind of natural aspect—from the waving reeds of the stream to the splendours of storm and sunset—in which any young artist would not feel that we are far indeed from having yet used the full resources of Nature’s representable truths to set forth her inimitable beauty?” He then compares the work of David Cox, and Constable, with that of Turner; the “rough and ready likeness of Nature” which the former “set themselves to win,” with that “refined expression of all subordinate parts in fit measure of subordination, which the latter sought for, and attained.”

I have purposely lingered over this article, which I fear very few of my audience may have seen; but I now pass from these wise words of my friend to tell you what I have come to think of Turner, approaching him from the view-point of a philosophical critic or appraiser. I may perhaps mention that it was when I held the Chair of Philosophy in St. Andrews that I began my detailed study of him. It would be extremely foolish for anyone to say that Turner was the greatest of all painters; but I maintain and proclaim (in season and out of season) that he was the greatest landscape painter that ever lived. It has been the fashion of some to speak of the chief workers in any special realm of

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achievement as the Shakespeares of that realm. If that be a legitimate way of expressing admiration due to insight, it may be justly said that Turner was the Shakespeare of Landscape Art, just as Beethoven was the Shakespeare of Music. And why? For this reason: No other artist ever entered into the innermost recesses of the Temple of Nature in the same way, and brought out her secrets with him afterwards; giving us both form and colour in all their variety and unity, their mystery and prodigality, their spaciousness, their vividness, their transparency. He took up, and all unconsciously included within the circle of his genius, the scattered excellences of many predecessors; and he has given us such an apocalypse of the Beautiful that of him alone is the expression true that *as a painter he has shewn us the poetry of Nature*. This is mainly due to the fact that he gave us the humanity of Nature, not by bringing man into his foregrounds (although he does that also), but by suggesting a human element within the material framework of Nature. And what is the result? It is this: We see a tenderness, a grace, a radiance, in some of his landscapes; a conflict, a pathos, a struggle, a revolt, even an agony, in others of them. We see the solemn tragedy of his own life, enacted and re-enacted on the stage of the theatre of Nature, on sea, and land, and sky; the joy, the

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extasy, the sadness, the "riddle of the painful earth." The range of his sympathy with Nature's moods has had no parallel, before or since, but they all tend to triumph, and ultimate victory.

But just as the figure-painter must have a model to sit to him, and so far to copy, the landscape painter must have Nature before him to reproduce. He cannot build up a scene out of his own inner subjectivity, his memory, or power of invention; nor can he trust to the reproductive work of those who have painted before him. He must go out into the presence of Nature, taking with him, as Wordsworth said, "a heart that watches and receives." In "a wise passiveness," he must wait to see those fugitive splendours, which the ordinary eye never sees, and which one gifted with "the inward eye" sees only now and then. He cannot collect, or store up, his impressions of Nature as in a cabinet, or register them in a catalogue. In fact, he is not, and can never be, "a collector." The fugitive splendour, the subtle spirit, the rare apocalypse of Nature—transient, kaleidoscopic, evanescent—that is what he rejoices in. But alas! he can only record one passing mood, one transient glimpse, and leave it to suggest a thousand more. And here it is that the greatness of the idealist is seen. *He* knows his limitations. He knows that he cannot record the evanescence just referred to; but he tries to make the little sterile

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bit of realism which he displays on his canvas suggest these immeasurable, unrecordable, idealistic things.

Here, again, it is that Turner is supreme. His drawings "might be fairly described as a series of experiments to discover with what system of colour it is possible to give the greatest amount of *colour-truth, consistently with truth of light and shade*; and will always remain more or less unintelligible to those who do not love landscape colour passionately, and see in its strength, variety and subtlety, the means of representing distinct moods of thought and feeling." (A. Hunt.)

I may further signalize the chief point in Mr. Hunt's admirable article. It was this: that in and by Art alone we cannot "reproduce the union which subsists in Nature between colour and light." It would require a lecture by itself to discuss this question. I only state what Mr. Hunt affirmed. His enthusiastic devotion to Turner, who, he says, "first caught a glimpse of the full scope of landscape-art," was paramount. He felt and taught that we must all follow in his foot-steps. But, said he, "gifts which would enable their possessor to make a name as a painter of the human form, and of the spirit which dwells therein, must—in a landscape painter—be combined with a temper which will make *Nature, and the spirit which dwells in Nature, his deepest*

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love, and the reproduction of her Beauty the very labour of his life."

Sir Walter Armstrong has said that Turner "seldom painted the sky itself. The dome of mysterious blue, with white cloud cathedrals standing against its infinity, had no charm for him. His interest was given to those vapours and exhalations which, as it were, project over the earth against the illimitable depths, and substitute an infinite mysteriousness for external space. The skies of the South came to him too late to be received cordially into his scheme of Art. Their spacious purity, their detachment and indifference to humanity, suggested conditions to which his spirit could not sympathetically turn." *But I think that there can be little doubt that Turner's later pictures of Nature—especially his water-colour sketches of mountain and cloud, of landscape suffused with mystery—were amongst the finest things he ever did. Let me first recall, in a sentence, some of his triumphs after 1838, *The Storm*, *The Slave Ship*, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, *The Burial of Wilkie*, *The Carnival of Venice*, *The Sun of Venice* (and other Venetian studies), his *Rain*, *Steam and Speed*. It is true that these glorious Venetian studies of his latest period are no longer to be seen in that atmosphere of glory through which they were first beheld. What survives is but the ghost of

**J. M. W. Turner*, p. 144.

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the past. But take his *Rain, Steam and Speed*, and I think that in it we have one of his finest later pictures because of its symbolic unity. As Sir Walter Armstrong says, "neither Rain, nor Speed, nor even Steam can really be painted; but, of all the three the painter can give a symbol, which is an organic whole. Turner saw his creation as a pattern in depth, as well as in width and height, as a pattern in mystery as well as in assertion, in movement as well as in repose. Through all these veils and quietudes he sends force rushing at us concrete but indefinite. In colour we have almost the masterpiece of Turner: a marvellous iridescence, an opalescent multitude of vaporous atoms, floating in the sun, veiling and transforming the landscape." *He does not "mimic Nature, he supplements her, creating as it were in her wake, and giving proof as he goes of his own share in the elemental forces."†

I should perhaps here ask you to remember the enormous number of Turner's works. It has no parallel in the history of Art; "21,000 pictures, drawings, and sketches by his hand are extant; or one for every day of his working life," says Armstrong. ‡Compare that with Reuben's 2,000; with Rembrandt's 400, and 350 etchings; with the 1,000 of Gainsborough, and

*Pp. 158-9.

†P. 160.

‡P. 188.

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the 700 of Raeburn. His life was, as has well been said, "a miracle of industry;" his "observation never slept." With him "to observe was to absorb."

All this continuous observation and ceaseless receptivity, this selecting recording and assimilating, this sympathetic symbolic portraiture, carried on for 50 years, has nothing like it in the long history of Art. He knew that he could do better than others around him; and although (it must be owned to his disadvantage), he did it to outstrip them, and to be in the van, the intensity of his taciturn love of Nature on its mystic side, his intuitive seizure of its multitudinous changeful glory, was one of the causes which kept him all these years as an industrious worker, glorying in the symbolism of Nature, while trying to reproduce its infinite variety and mystery.

And to the old question—which will be repeated and repeated time out of mind—How are Turner's pictures so fascinating to the young idealist in Art? this must be the reply. He was no photographer, but he understood and was able to reproduce the infinite variety of Nature, its changes and its mystery, the kaleidoscopic rearrangement of all that it shews when we first see it. His pictures are explanations, not of that which his senses grasped at first-sight, nor of that which his imagination seized at second-sight, and

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projected on the canvas created by himself, but of what lay deeper still.

I have just referred to the total absence of photographic copying (of course his work was antecedent to photography) or realistic reproduction in his landscapes. But this was allied to a very remarkable realism—that is to say, truthful reproduction of Nature in her most fugitive impressions. Turner knew how to interpret Nature by ‘the light that never was on sea or land,’ without inventing either processes or products; and so his finest landscapes were *transformations*, in the noblest sense of the term. He was the most receptive student of Nature that ever traversed her river-sides, her dales, her sea-coasts, and her mountain-tracks. By so doing he entered into a heritage that was sent on to him, absorbed it, and reproduced it for his contemporaries and successors.

It is most instructive to compare him, as I have said, with his contemporaries, as well as with predecessors and successors in the hierarchy; with Girtin, with Daubigny, with Constable, with Corot, with Millet, and Rousseau. In all of these, although in very different ways, there was a reaction from Claudism, from the stale copying of the models of the past, by formal rule and a process prescribed.

But I would require to deliver a course of lectures on the *Liber Studiorum*, and the still more

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glorious *Rivers of France*, or deal with his vignettes to Rogers' poems, and many another book, to give you a full idea of the glory of this one man as a landscape-artist.

Some of my audience may have heard the remark made by a foolish and audacious man, when looking on one of Turner's greatest pictures, "I never saw the like of that in Nature." "Don't you wish you had seen it?" was the reply. It leads me to a farther point in the appraisal of this great chief of landscape art. He "disdained the real," as some put it, in his picture of Kilchurn Castle in Scotland, and still more explicitly in his drawing of The Chateau of Amboise, in his *Rivers of France*. His was unquestionably a disdainful ignoring of literal accuracy. He would have replied in spirit—could he have been troubled to do so—to any questioner, "What do you mean by accuracy? A topographer is not an artist. A great contemporary picture may be a pictorial legend. It may have been most carefully 'composed;' but have neither reality, nor identity, in it."

We must admit that there was some audacity in all this, on Turner's part. His disdain for the reproduction of the actual before his outward eye, when he saw a more glorious ideal floating before his inward vision, was stupendous; and explains much of his seemingly erratic work. His exaggerations were notorious, and his occasional loss

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of the real beauty of architecture through this ignoring of realistic accuracy. But the question always recurs, What *is* "accuracy" in Art, or Philosophy, or even in Theology? If there is no imagination behind it, a great picture may be a pictorial legend. Fidelity to what is before your eyes does not insure a reproduction of the real, although there must be no outrage on it, and no discarding of it; so that, as one critic puts it, "a tower does not look like a stack, nor an obelisk like a factory chimney."

There is a pleasant story told of Turner's travelling in Italy from Florence to Rome, in company with U. R. J. Evans of Dublin. They worked together on their way, in those delightful days of unconventional if somewhat dilatory travel, each ignorant of who the other was. When they talked of their work afterwards, Evans said: "When we compared our drawings the difference was strange. I assure you there was not a single stroke of Turner's that I could see like Nature, not a line nor an object; and yet my work was worthless in comparison with his. The whole glory of the scene was in his."

The periods in his artistic life have been divided out by some as parallel to what we see in Plato's philosophical one; those of apprenticeship, of travel, and of mastership, or *lehrjahre*, *wanderjahre*, and *meisterjahre*. But while there is a surface resemblance, the parallel may be over-

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done; and some, who made use of it, afterwards gave it up, Ruskin for example. It may be best to abandon the chronological arrangement, although Ruskin fell back on decades; and also the arrangement of his work in water-colour (as Sir Walter Armstrong does) according to their character, ingenious though it is, the first class containing his "drawings which ran parallel to his work in oil;" the second "his drawings for the line-engraver;" the third his "drawings in body-colour on tinted paper;" the fourth his "colour-sketches and dreams of beauty on white paper, built up with a subtlety and dexterity in the use of transparent colour, which no other painter has approached."

It is as a Nature-painter, pure and simple, that I have chiefly studied him; in which, however, he always blended incident, the historic sense, and humanity, with and in Nature. Take, for example, his *Hannibal crossing the Alps*. A storm of snow and wind meets the great Carthaginian general with his army, wending their way wearily along and underneath. Note the complete title which he selected for his picture. It was "Snow-storm. Hannibal crossing the Alps," Nature first, humanity second; and both combined in superlative style. It is a wonderful bit of imaginative daring, this welding of humanity with Nature. Similarly in his glorious *Bay of Baiae*, his *Ulysses deriding Polyphmus*, the *Sun of*

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Venice, the Golden Bough, the Approach to Venice, and The Fighting Temeraire. Alas! that the superlative *Bay of Baiae*, with its old wonder-charm, is doomed. Its delicate opalescent colour gone. The *Ulysses* is even worse, that mail-suit which was the eye of the picture being scarce distinguishable now. How terribly reckless he was in his choice, and use, of pigments! and how the world now suffers from his recklessness. And yet we are receiving from time to time at our National Gallery in London, at the Tate Gallery, and elsewhere, many priceless relics of his genius.

Perhaps his most interesting landscape picture in the first of these galleries is the "Fighting Temeraire" being tugged into its last berth; its universal popularity being due to its still glorious colour, to its subject, its associations with Trafalgar and the Victory, as it was next to the flag ship in the fighting line. But it is most of all the combination of historic incident and patriotic sentiment, with the beauty of water and sky, and the tragedy of the great ship being towed away to be broken up, and to die as the daylight is seen dying in the west.

I am sure I am correct in saying that Turner brought Humanity into his pictures of Nature, just as Wordsworth brought it into his poems on Nature. The parallel was singularly close; but I cannot work it out here and now. His

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debt to his predecessors was great, but he surpassed them all by conquests of those territories in which they had worked in a fragmentary manner before him. And the result was (as Zeller says of Plato's relation to his predecessors) that "he was neither an envious imitator, nor an irresolute eclectic."

His work on the *Liber Studiorum* was a sort of intermediate effort between his early water-colour and his later work in oil, before he returned to his yet grander water-colour; and it coincided with his *wanderjahre*, the glorious series of *The Rivers of France* being by far the finest of his sketches in foreign lands. I have already said that it is interesting to trace the evolution of his genius through all its stages to the end, and it is noteworthy that it did not shew itself full-robed till he threw aside the idea of criticizing his contemporaries and predecessors; when "at the last," as Sir Walter Armstrong puts it, "he had thrown rivalry, and reminiscence, and fear of judgment overboard," "looking neither to the right, the left, nor behind him, but ahead."

While the greatest of water-colourists, he at first tried to make that medium a rival to oil, and he succeeded in doing so; but he came to see that both were equally good for the presentation and perpetuation of the Beautiful. They were, in their provinces, distinct each from each; but they were harmonious in the end they aimed at and achieved.

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It is usually a great presumption for any worker in realms outside that of plastic Art to venture on the criticism of a master to whom the world is so much beholden; but perhaps I may venture to say just this, that he at times threw into his work so much detail, and elaborated so much, that he almost over-magnified its mysteriousness while he never over-praised its glory.

Many a writer has referred to his power of selection from Nature, and his frequent compression of the scenes he has reproduced. His artistic memory was marvellous, both as to form and colour, and it would sometimes seem that he could summon up from "the vasty deep" as many things as Shakespeare's gigantic memory could, and utilize them nearly as well; but—and here we see the hand of the master—he made wise choice from that storehouse of memory; and, as in the sister art of literary composition, it was by what he left out, and in that to which he gave no expression, that we see the hand of the master.

It is indeed a sad reflection that the colour in some of the finest of Turner's pictures has now faded beyond recovery. Alas! their owners—chance proprietors—have not all acted as Mr. Ruskin and Mr. Henry Vaughan did—who covered them with veils, or kept them in closed cabinets for most of the year. When the year 2000 A. D. is reached it is very likely that most if not all of the loveliest will have disappeared. Those

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works of ethereal loveliness, which delight us now, will have vanished into the dim and formless void. Let us hope that one or other of two things—and I cannot say which is best—will occur. Either (1) that by some new scientific process our adepts at preservation will have discovered one better than photography, by means of which these treasures of the past may be transmitted to a future age; or (2) that, out of the turmoil and distorted outlook of the present hour, a new race of artists will arise—as I am certain that poets will—to rival the glories of our magnificent Turnerian era. If they do so, I am sure it will be by first entering into their heritage as the assimilators of the spirit of this rare “Prophet of the Beautiful.”



Photograph by F. Hollyer

TINTERN ABBEY



NORHAM CASTLE ON THE TWEED

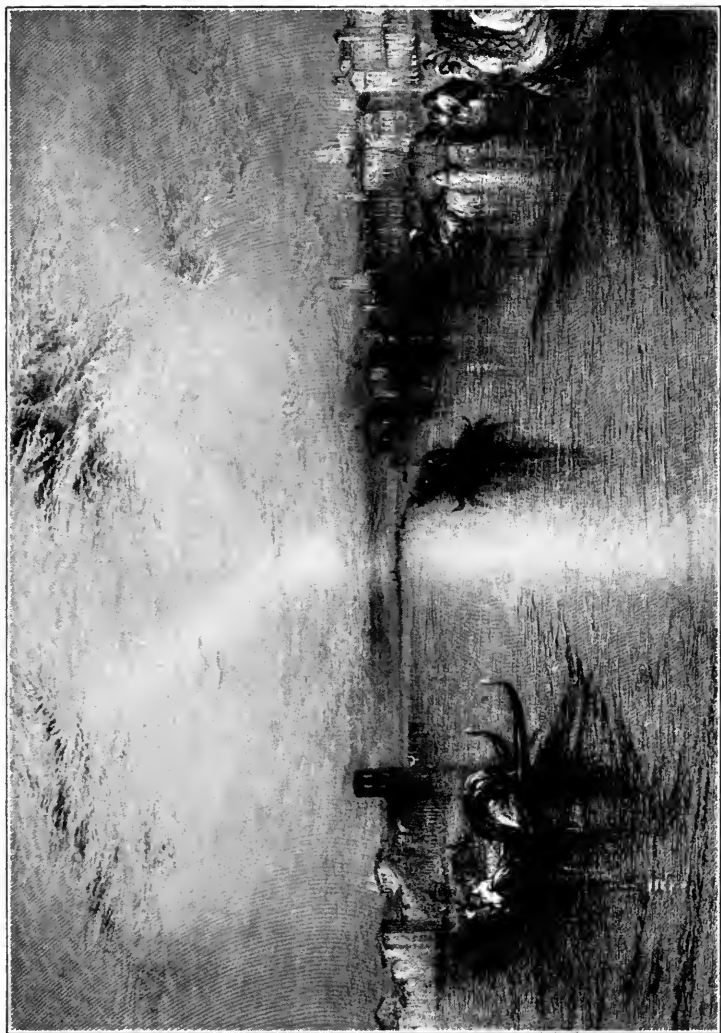


Braun Autotype

CROSSING THE BROOK









LECTURE SECOND.

LANDSCAPE ART IN ENGLAND AND FRANCE.



OWARDS the close of my first lecture, I reached an interesting point in reference to the landscape-art of England and of the world, subsequent to that of Turner. The century which we all recently left, and that on which we have entered, have been able to teach us more of the material world than any which have preceded them. The processes of Nature have been studied, and its laws discovered, as they never were before. Even the nooks and corners of the earth have been ransacked by the insatiable pioneers of discovery. Old historic places, the shrines of earlier civilization—in Egypt, India and the east—have been explored with minutest care; but our Art has not followed at the same pace (I mean Art in combination with Science, and as applied by its hand-maiden, Archeology)

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into these regions. Many of our artists since the days of Turner have been content to keep to traditional grooves, and to work along conventional lines; much more than our scientific men, our philosophers, our historians, and our historical geographers. They have continued to copy from models; and, in consequence, have exhibited results which only satisfied an earlier age. I bring no indictment against them, because they admit the fact I now assert. Our landscape artists for many generations copied the trees and meadows, the rocks and the river-scenes, that delighted their predecessors. Turner, as we saw, broke away from all that slavery; but he had no successors, and he did not found or form a school.

I think, however, that the reaction of modern Science upon Art has been sure, though slow; and it has had numerous indirect results. As was inevitable, it brought Art back again to Nature; and made the general artistic consciousness of people more and more dissatisfied with blurred outlines, nondescript inventions, the clever bundling together of a mass of impressions as to Nature, instead of a faithful portrayal of objectivity. This has led the general mind of the race to look to Nature afresh; and to what end? Not to tarry there, inspecting external beauty, however clearly revealed, but to pass within and beyond externality; finding a mystic meaning with-

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in it, due to its perpetual changes, and its apocalypse of what it never tarries to unfold.

The result is this. While the inheritor of old traditions, who reverences what is venerable and remote, is always more or less enslaved by them—his loyalty having its euthanasia in a sort of willing thralldom—slowly, side by side with this, a new spirit is at work. Old traditions are broken up by a fresh perception of the meaning of Nature, and such a new love of its mystery and glory as we trace to a certain extent in the art of Turner.

In Turner's work there was no fidelity to Nature, in the ordinary sense of that phrase; and yet, there were no abrupt departures from Nature. It may even be said that he was true to the higher Nature, by being false to the lower; because he had "the vision and the faculty divine" of seeing the higher at one and the same time within the lower, and yet above and beyond it. Be it granted to all commonplace critics that he was inaccurate as a delineator of things which the common eye perceives; nay, that he at times disregarded the real, simply because he saw and felt so much of the ideal within it. Topographical accuracy had no charm for him. He was never a maker of maps. More important still, he put colour into most of the drawings which he never saw; but only selected to enhance the beauty, or glory, or suggestiveness of Nature.

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Be it admitted that Turner never painted trees with any dexterity, that he lacked what Hamerton called "the sylvan sense, the delight in forest scenery." Hence, as we shall see, the French idealists—Millet, Corot, Rousseau, etc.—surpassed him in this. Mr. Hamerton adds: "With a knowledge of landscape, vaster than any mortal ever possessed before him, his whole existence was a succession of dreams. * * * * He would sit down and sketch another dream, in the very presence of the reality itself."

Turner "hid himself," in part intentionally; in part because he felt that "he could not interpret himself except by means of the brush."* As a rule "he would never let anyone see him draw." There were strange opposites in him, and these are only explainable by a simultaneous life in two worlds, *with an almost dual-consciousness of a most consistent life in both of them*. A royal imagination, a supreme insight, a radiancy of touch, an ethereal poetic sense almost like that of Shakespeare, were allied to personal habits not always refined. He could live in squalor, and was not always noble in his personal transactions. One of his admirers even ventures to liken him to a hedgehog. But England, and the world, owe to him, and must forever owe innumerable debts. As Mr. Monkhouse says, he be-

*Cosmo Monkhouse.

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came "the converter of topography into Art;" and, in a much better sentence, he adds, that he "treated buildings as valuable chiefly for the breaking of sunbeams." His marvellous gift of memory seems to have repelled some people, but what was its result? He was able to record, to renew and perpetuate, the multitudinous impressions of Nature, which came to him in magical troops, and then vanished into these mystic chambers of his being; there to lie latent, securely locked up, without ever blending or confusing one another; and thence to be recalled, and reproduced with lordliest power, when they were needed.

It is curious that the majority of peasants, in the most beautiful countries of the world, are blind to the loveliness and glories around them; but it is not curious that peasant-people awaken to the interest of portrait-painting, before they are able to understand landscape-art. Probably the chief reason has been a selfish one. Some have thought that it would be useful to send on to posterity the *vera effigies* of important, or distinguished, men and women, chiefly because they were dead and gone, and could never be seen again; but for the transmission of landscape-art, of scenery that was always present, or would return, what need for that? These objects do not die as human things do.

I wish I could bring out satisfactorily the

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relations in which Turner stood to his predecessor Girtin, only two years his senior, and whom he surpassed immeasurably. They were not friends, and yet the younger admired the elder's painting; and, of one of his pictures he said, "I never could have made anything like it." But he was both selfish and secretive; and with all his unparalleled greatness was inordinately ambitious, from first to last, to eclipse every rival. I have already likened him to Abelard, the medieval sophist—most skilful of swordsmen, most selfish of disputants—who wished to humble his adversary, that he might reign alone.

These were his faults and failings, over which we need not tarry now. We think rather of his artistic greatness and the debt we owe to him. No artist ever had such a run of fortune in England leading to profit and independence. How different was the pioneer of the French school of ideal-realists, who had so many affinities with him. At the age of fifteen he began to exhibit at the Royal Academy and he was elected an associate when he was twenty-seven. He soon became the talk of the society-folk, and so rich that he said he did not know what to do with his money. He was vilified by the envious; but long afterwards he had perhaps the greatest hero-worship that any man has ever had, in the sustained eulogy of Ruskin.

Now let us grant at once that Turner's tech-

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nique was often faulty, and his power of reproducing reality imperfect. He soon gave up all attempt to do so. But why? Because he came to see that Art was to him the vehicle for expressing what his inward eye beheld. He even came to regard the scrupulously exact Nature painter's as dullards; and he lived to express, and to reproduce, what he and he alone saw.

In his *Life of Turner* Mr. Hamerton says "he used any colour that the experimentalizing ingenuity of modern chemistry could invent for the temptation of an artist."¹ But, as Mr. Hamerton also remarks, "his colour, in his most delicate work, hardly seems to be laid on the paper by any means known to us, but suggests the idea of a vapourized deposit."² Mr. Hamerton's criticism and appreciation are so admirable that I continue to quote from him: "He was always trying to paint the impossible."³ But he also points out that Turner "excelled the artists of all time in his appreciation of mystery in Nature, and his superlatively excellent renderings of it;" while he adds that his eulogist, Ruskin, was "the first writer on Art who explained the value of mystery in painting."⁴ Again, he tells the story of an American purchaser of one of his pictures. Turner asked his friend Leslie "what the

¹ Page 542.

² Page 344.

³ Page 345.

⁴ Page 346.

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purchaser thought of it." The reply was, "He thinks it indistinct," to which Turner replied in a sort of good-humoured censure, "You should tell him that indistinctness is my fault and my merit." Hamerton says that "the greatest technical merit in Turner's colouring is his wonderfully brilliant performances in the upper notes;" and he adds that he "carried up more colour into the regions of light than any painter."¹ All this was due to his ideality. Claude was the pioneer of idealism in Art, but Turner outstripped him altogether. Constable was far more realistic, and the Pre-Raphaelities—to whom we shall soon come—were still more so. Only note, here and now, that the great tidal wave of idealism in Art rose to its height in Turner.

I have already said that it is to be feared the day is not a distant one when most, if not all, of his great pictures will have disappeared; partly because of the bad pigments he made use of, partly because of the careless way in which he left so many of them exposed to the glare of the sun, and also because of the way in which he sometimes mixed up oil with water-colour. But, sad though it is, that is the ultimate fate of all plastic art. Where are now the pictures of Zeuxis and Apelles? Our chief consolation is that the art-instinct of the human race survives, and is ineradicable, a *Κτῆμα ἐς αἰΐ*

¹Page 352.

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joy forever; and that new art products, better, I believe, than all those of the past, are certain to arise.

I may go even a step farther, and say that the time will come when Turner will be known and remembered mainly, not by his water-colours or his oils, but by the engravings which he gave to the world in the *Liber Studiorum*, and from those in his *Rivers of France*; while he will live longer still in the interpretative pages of his great expounder, John Ruskin. *Modern Painters*, and other treasures of Art-criticism, will live and educate mankind for generations to come.

Enough if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour.

And what would the world now give if there had been an art critic like Ruskin in Greece in the days of Pericles, and in what Browning so happily calls it, in reference to the Italian workmanship of a later age,

Art's spring-birth, so dim and dewy.

I now pass from English Landscape Art to the work of two great Frenchmen, Corot and Millet. (Jean Baptiste Camille Corot, and Jean Francois Millet.)

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AS in Turner's case, you have now easy access to many books on the life work of both men, so that I need not enlarge on that.

I wish to bring out their respective excellences, by comparing them with others, and especially with Turner. Well; Corot never could have painted a stormy sky as Turner did. He did not understand it. He loved peace, pursued it, and portrayed it. It is one of his great merits as a landscape artist that he knew the limit of his genius, and never tried to represent that Nature he loved so well, either in a blaze of glory, or in an agony of storm.

He knew his limitations, and was invariably modest in never parading them, as some relatively great men—egoists at heart—have sought to magnify themselves by enlarging on their own infirmities. But we—who have profited so much by him, and learned so much from him—may perhaps try respectfully to point out what these limitations were. We in England instinctively compare him, as I have said, with our own Turner; and, in doing so, we find that Corot never opens up for us a door of entrance into the mystery of Nature. He would himself have disliked (or at least not cared for) an apocalypse of Beauty flashed out upon him from obscure hiding-places, casual glances from nooks and crannies. It was the common ongoing of

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Nature on sweet summer days, its peaceful reposeful face, that he delighted in. Even when in Rome, during that visit of his young manhood, when he painted the Coliseum, and St. Peter's as seen from the Pincio, it was the peaceful aspects of the scenes that appealed to him. This was the outcome of temperamental and inherited tendencies.

Corot wrote: "I made my first drawing from Nature under the eye of the painter whose only advice to me was to render with the utmost fidelity everything that I saw before me." Another of his teachers, Victor Bertin, taught him to introduce figures into his drawings, "without which he used to say that a landscape was uninhabitable," but to do this by following precedent, or the old classical rules.

When he was twenty-nine years of age he went for three years to Rome. On his arrival there he became, as so many become, acutely conscious of his defects; and in a most interesting letter he wrote, "I could not draw at all. Two men stopped to chat together. I began to sketch them, part at a time—the head, for instance. They separated, and I had nothing but some bits of head on my paper. Some children were sitting on the steps of a church. I began again. Their mother called them away, and my book would be full of ends of noses, foreheads and tresses of hair. I determined that I could not

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come home again another time without a complete piece of work, and I tried for the first time a drawing *par masse*, a rapid drawing. I set myself to outline, in the twinkling of an eye, the first group I found. If it only staid a short time I had at any rate caught the character; if it staid long enough, I could get the details."

Returning to France, and to its northern coast scenery, he writes thus, "With my brush in my hand I go out nutting through the woods, in my studio; and there also I can hear the birds singing, and the trees rustling in the wind; and I can see the streams and the rivers flowing on, carrying thousands of mirror pictures of sky and earth; and the sun rises and sets for me in my own house."

Corot had no struggle with adversity like his great contemporary, Millet. He was never in want, although he was not always appreciated, and the judges of the Salon were sometimes hostile to him. But that did not disturb him, because he believed that he had got into close touch with Nature in his own way, and that his hour of recognition would come. He waited for it without any impatience, or clamour, or chagrin at the delay. Nothing is finer in the way of appraisal than his own letters on his art. He said to one who had noted the wonderful atmosphere of his landscapes, and the feathery grace of his foliage: "Yes, the birds must be able to fly

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through the branches.” But listen to his own account of the life of an artist in his relationship to Nature. He wrote, “A landscape painter has a delightful day. He gets up about three A. M., before sunrise. He goes out, sits down under a tree, and waits, watching. At first there is little to be seen. * * * Everything is sweetly scented, and trembles under the wakening breeze of the dawn. * * * First one ray of sunlight then another. The flowers wake. The birds begin to twitter their morning prayer. One sees nothing, yet all is there. * * * The sun arises. Everything sparkles and glitters, all is in full light, still soft and caressing; and I paint! I paint! The far distance in its simple contour and harmony fades into the sky, through an atmosphere of mist and ether. The flowers raise their heads, the birds flit to and fro. A peasant riding a white horse disappears down the narrow path. And the artist? He paints!” * * * As the hours advance he writes: “We see too much. There is nothing left to the imagination. Let us go to breakfast at the farm. Work, my friends! I will rest! I will doze and dream of my morning scene. I will dream of my picture; and, later on, I will paint my dream.” * * * “The sun has sunk. There remains but a soft filmy touch of pale yellow—the last gleam from the sun which has dropped into the deep blue of night—melting from soft green into a yet

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paler turquoise of an intangible delicacy and an indescribable liquid mistiness. Everything is fast fading, yet we know that everything is still there. All is vague, for Nature is falling asleep. * * * The illusion is over. The sun having gone to rest, the inner sun—the sun of the soul—the sun of art—arises. Good! my picture is finished.”

As his dexterous interpreter* writes, “Here we see the artist, the poet, the lover of Nature; we see also the man who never painted Nature in a convulsion. When the sun blazes at full mid-day, when it sets in an orgy of colour, Corot will have none of it.”

From first to last, there was no tragedy in Corot's life, no *sturm und drang*. He was invariably quiet, happy, simple, kindly, peaceful, contented. All his letters are serene; and he was most generous in his appreciation of others, his brother-artists whom he habitually placed above himself. When ignored by the critics, or the picture-dealers, his habitual consolation was “I have my Art; that remains.” He likened his contemporary, Rousseau, to “a soaring eagle;” himself, to a “singing lark.” And we may never forget—posterity will never forget—his noble generosity to the widow of his friend, Francois Millet, not long before he died,

*Miss Ethel Birnstingl or Miss Alice Pollard; for the book is a joint one, published by Methuen & Coy.

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when he (Corot) was receiving large payments for his pictures. He returned ten thousand francs to his agent, the dealer, and told him to pay one thousand every year for ten years "to the widow of my friend."

He was not a cultivated artist. He read little, and took no interest in Science, or History, or Politics. But he went on his own way, and did his own work. If asked what was his specialty as an artist—what differentiated him in a crowd of illustrious contemporaries—I would say it was this: He never obtruded himself, or his own subjectivity, into any picture; nor did he ever try to photograph what was present to his eye. He seized a passing mood of Nature, a transient disclosure of it; and, what is more significant, when out in the fields and woods, he took brief—very brief—notes from Nature, to be afterwards worked out by him, and dealt with in a few touches. He did not try to give anything else; because these touches revealed much more than a canvas, daubed all over with minute detail, could possibly do.

The changes of the seasons were chronicled for us by him in a few rapid strokes. The boundless life of Nature, in her ever-fluctuating moods, was depicted with an immediacy and vividness that was arresting and joyous; but Corot did not allow us to linger over-long in one mood of rejoicing, by giving us too much to see

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on his canvases. He wrote, "If you crowd in too much, you weaken effect, or falsify everything in the effort to be too exact. No two hours of the day are just alike, and you cannot put both on one canvas." He depicted all the seasons, and all the hours; although he loved best the leafy summer, in its tremulousness, its ethereality, its transparency, its warmth, and its fullness of life. Over all his pictures we feel that a healthful breeze is blowing. But he recognized more than any other landscape painter in France, the glory of the changefulness of Nature, and the difficulty into which this brought the artist. Referring to the movements of the clouds, he writes, "'Stop!'" said I, "trying to emulate Joshua with the sun! But the clouds continued to drive, the sky changing continually in form and colour. I cried out to them *to stand*, if only for a moment, that I might not paint them wrongly; but no; as though a sky standing still would be a sky at all!"

I have said in quasi-criticism, that in his pictures Jean Corot does not give us the mystery in Nature, the remote, the impenetrable, the inscrutable, which is so supremely fascinating in Turner's work; but who, I ask, has ever let us feel the secret of Nature's peace so well—its charm, in the gentle stir of leaves with their twinkling lights and fluttering, feathery loveliness, their whisperings of rest? When I look on

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one of Corot's finest landscapes and see the pale mist floating up from the bed of the stream, while the light of day dies out, and the stars begin to twinkle, I recall the lines of Keats,

There crept a little noiseless noise amongst the leaves
Born of the very sigh that silence heaves.

We thank him for a score of other things on which I would fain enlarge, because of his introduction of idealism into Art, from which there has been so sad a degeneracy in the school of the Impressionists in France; but, I pass on to deal in even greater brevity with one who is a still more fascinating personality viz.: Jean Francois Millet.

THERE is no painter "in the artist list enrolled" who fascinates us in some respects in the same way as that French peasant, Jean Francois Millet. He was "a son of the soil," and other nations love him somewhat in the same way as Scotsmen love Robert Burns. I know how honoured he was across the Atlantic, and also how many of you in America recognized his greatness even before the French or the English did so. His own noble character, his admiration of simple peasant life, and his effort to transmit representations of it to posterity on his canvases, his grand struggle with adversity, his modesty—almost unconscious of the genius that underlay

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it, and quite unspoiled by the success that followed it—all these have been recorded for the world by his friends, Sensier and Rousseau, and re-told in a charming manner by Miss Peacock.

Apart from his immortal pictures—the *Gleaners*, the *Angelus*, the *Wood-Cutters*, the *Sower*, the *Shepherdess*—many of his smaller ones are poems on canvas; such as the Well in the Ionides Collection at South Kensington, which tells us as much as any well I have seen, except the sacred one at Nazareth. The peasant genius of this half-educated boy went back inevitably and intuitively to Michael Angelo for strength, and to Poussin for gentleness. The records of his visits to the Paris Galleries, the Louvre and the Luxembourg, are profoundly interesting. He saw little in the latter but what was conventional, what Miss Peacock wisely calls the “repellent insipidity of invention and expression.” The greatly popular, but quite conventional, De la Roche had no charm for him. But, in the Louvre—that superb gallery of greatness, which casts its spell upon and over every lover of the Beautiful, and is to all art-lovers in Paris the chief centre of attraction in the city—he found a new world disclosed to him, and in it he lived with congenial spirits from hour to hour.

The art critics of the day, who were also the adjudicators of the honours of the Parisian gal-

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lery, were not yet in sympathy with—they did not yet understand—those who were called “the men of 1830,” that wondrous little band of comrades who came to be known and talked of as “the Barbizon School;” a group quite as important in the history of Art as our own Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. That Nature should be a mirror of man in its most transient moods; that its shadowy evanescence, that its sudden disclosures—which tarried for no eye to reproduce—should have interest to anyone, was incomprehensible to the academic officials of the Salon; and so, the works of this group of painters were systematically shut out from view. For more than a dozen years Rousseau was so disparaged, and excluded, that it is said he was familiarly known as “Le grand refuse.” It mattered nothing. The group was not silenced. Their hour had not yet come; but it was coming.

And slowly the art critics opened their eyes to see what others had already seen, and the artists themselves joined in the tribute. Diaz wrote, “there is a newcomer, who has colour, movement and expression; a real painter.”

But it was not yet his hour of triumph, because his most distinctive style had not been reached. Energy, reality, robustness of life, strength of purpose, joyousness of work were shown; but he next painted the *Sower*, which is to be seen in your Boston Museum, with its inimitable sugges-

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tion of patient continuous labour, of cheerful perseverance in well-doing onwards to accomplishment. It was now that he saw, and said to his friend Sensier, "Art is not a partizan. It is a battlefield. Perhaps it is suffering that makes the artist express himself best."

I would like to give you some idea of the Barbizon district, and of its simple forest-charm, but it is impossible here and now. I only say that it is questionable if anyone loved the woods more intensely than Millet did, unless it was the great Russian musical composer Tschai-kovsky, or your own American prose-writer Thoreau, at Walden. But it is more important to give you some idea of the man, as disclosed in his own words. He wrote thus to Sensier, in a letter which reveals his limitation, as well as his strength:

"Peasant subjects suit my temperament best; for I must confess, at the risk of being taken for a Socialist, that the human side in Art touches me the most; and, if I could do what I liked best, I would undertake nothing either in landscape or figure-painting that was not the result of a direct impression, produced by some aspect of Nature. The joyous side never shews itself to me. I do not know where it is. I have never seen it. The most joyful thing I know is quietude, the exquisite enjoyment of silence, so delicious either in the forest, or in any cultivated spot."

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And thus he wrote in numerous letters to his friends; so that, whether he painted a sower in the fields, or peasants going to work, or a woman feeding hens, or a shepherd or shepherdess, all have the indefinable air of simplest realism, of peasant life as he knew it, in its hard toil and cheerful labour, which he delighted to portray; more especially the peasant shepherd-life of France, with its solitude, its watchfulness, its patient care. Certainly no artist ever painted these things as Millet did.

I cannot finish my estimate of the work of this French painter without quoting to you some of the words of that appreciator of his genius, Miss Netta Peacock, who writes thus: "Touched by a sense of the sacredness of the routine of field-life, of the mystery and miracle of changing seasons and yielding soil, Millet went straight to the heart of things for his material, in all humility and with the utmost sincerity. Solitude, real and profound, he has introduced into many of his pictures, but never isolation; for his figures have grown out of their surroundings. They are one with the Universe. Silence he has given us—far-reaching, stretched over the vast plains, brooding peacefully with outstretched wings over mother and sleeping child, or tired man and wife resting after the continuous toil of the day. * * * His figures are a type of the everlastingness of labour. Fate—

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large-eyed and relentless—holds the worker in her grip; dumbly acquiescent, he waits upon Nature's ever varying moods, and, in complete submission to eternal law and order, lives and dies.

“Though every chapter in the great Book of Humanity contains an idea, the only one that appealed with conviction to the tender-hearted peasant was that which dealt with those whose lives are cast in rugged places. His strength lay in his rare sense of kinship with the toilers of the land. * * * The functions of rustic labour, in their rythmic rise and fall, bear a certain affinity to religious ritual; they are removed from the domain of conscious effort, and become unconscious acts of worship. Thus it was that Millet understood the life of the fields.

“In the most humble realities of rural life he has shewn us eternal truths. In an attitude, he conveys the deep pathos of renunciation; in a gesture, the dignity of labour. His young girls are dreamers, watching geese, tending sheep, or momentarily roused from their unassailable tranquillity, to follow, with outstretched neck and straining eye, the flight of the bird on the wing. His women are mothers caring for the little ones with all the unplumbed tenderness of motherhood, or housewives faithfully fulfilling ordinary domestic duties, ‘the daily round, the common task.’ His men are workers with homes, earn-

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ing by the sweat of their brow the daily bread for wife and child. Everything is precious, is holy; * * * the mystery, the sense of intimacy, the poetry extracted from little things, haunts us with the persistence of a half-forgotten melody."

Another paragraph I may add, from its special reference to art-criticism: "In the full swing of the Romantic regeneration, Millet remained solitary and apart. He was a realist, full of stern ideals; an idealist who drew deep from life's commonest truths. His work most convincingly conveys the temper of his mind and the colour of his thought. He was essentially a painter of character; he did not seek to portray Beauty for itself, but managed to convey the abiding loveliness of all that is humble, whether in Humanity or Nature."

There have been many peasant artists, as well as noble peasant poets, "sons of the soil," who have risen from lowly homesteads, and done superlative work, outrivalling all their superiors who became famous in the lines of conventional Art; but none, I think, have ever risen and retained from first to last the splendid peasant sympathies, and permanent ideals, that J. Francois Millet did. In most cases, the rise of a working-man to distinction means the abandonment of his peasant nature. The majority forget who their ancestors were; and cannot, or will not, let you know anything about them. As one

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of my own clerical friends remarked, when he was transferred from a rural parish and came to live in a prosperous community of the *nouveaux riches*, and had to minister to them ecclesiastically, "These people around me here seem never to have had any grandfathers or grandmothers, let alone their parents." Now, in Millet we find from first to last in his career almost a glorying in the peasant-ancestry whence he came; while the constant note of sincerity and reality in all he did emanated from that source. He had a feeling for Nature quite unborrowed and distinctive, a sense of the grandeur of its ever-changing moods, with simple peasant toil in the forefront, hard day-labour in the fields while the sun was shining, with evening work indoors. He also had a perception—as Turner had—of the mystery as well as of the loveliness of Nature, its latent powers of life, its bountifulness as well as its gifts to man; and all of it an ally to devotion. This it was which stirred up in him a life-long effort to reproduce these things on canvas; and just as with the Pre-Raphaelites in England, it was a reaction from the conventional Art which went before it.

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RETURNING to England and to Turner, I remark in closing that no artist in the world ever had such an interpreter and vindicator as Turner had in Ruskin; and I go back to this subject in order to bring out some new points in reference to both men. I venture to say that Ruskin demonstrated to his day and generation that Turner—whom so many of his contemporaries thought unnatural—was the truest to Nature of any landscape artist that ever lived; so that he effected a revolution, not only in Art-criticism, and Art-appraisal, but also in Art-production. He proved, as well as affirmed, that the “real colour of Nature had never been attempted by any school.” He saw, and said, that “the finish and specific grandeur of Nature had been given; but her fullness, space, and mystery, never.” He showed that “for conventional colour” Turner substituted a pure, straightforward rendering of facts, not of such facts as had been before attempted, but of all that is most brilliant and inimitable. “He went to the cataract for its iris, to the conflagration for its flame, asked of the sea its intensest azure, and of the sky its clearest gold.” More especially he shewed that “in his power of associating cold with warm light no one has ever approached him. The old masters, content with one simple tone, sacrificed to its unity all the exquisite gradations and varied touches of re-

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lief and change, by which Nature unites her advancing hours, one with another. They give the warmth of the sinking sun, over-whelming all things in its gold; but they do not give those gray passages about the horizon, when—seen through its dying light—the cool and the gloom of night gather themselves for their victory.”

Again Ruskin writes, “Turner, and Turner only, could follow and render that mystery of decided line, that distinct, sharp, visible but inextricable richness, which—examined part by part—is to the eye nothing but confusion and defect; but, taken as a whole, is all unity, mystery and truth.” And he adds: “Turner introduced a new era in landscape Art by shewing that the foreground may be sunk for the sake of the distance; and that it is possible to express proximity to the spectator without giving anything like completeness to near objects.” Again, “if we have to express varied light, our first aim must be to get the shadows sharp and visible; and this is not to be done by blackness. They must be clear, distinct, and even shot with light,” as he puts it.

The marvellous secret of Turner’s shadows is the way in which they adumbrate the light, and reveal its mystery. They speak to us whole volumes describing the power and glory of Nature, whether seen in the sky or on the hills, in the

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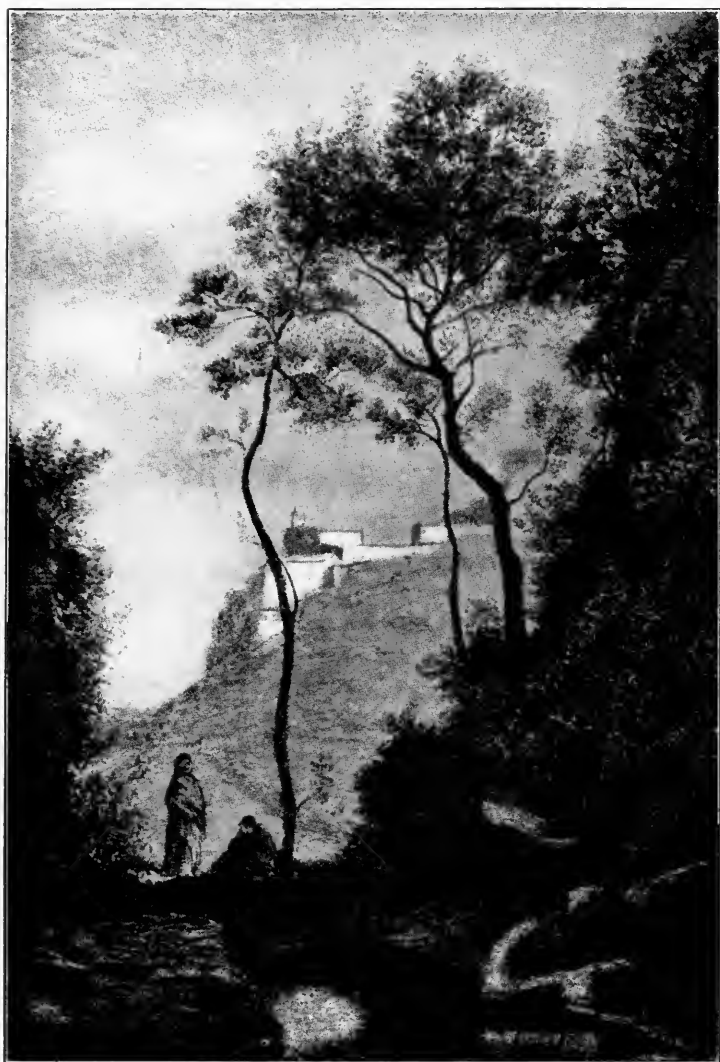
rivers or the sea, or the grass of the field. They interpret so much to us, and enable us to recognize new splendours in the commonplace.





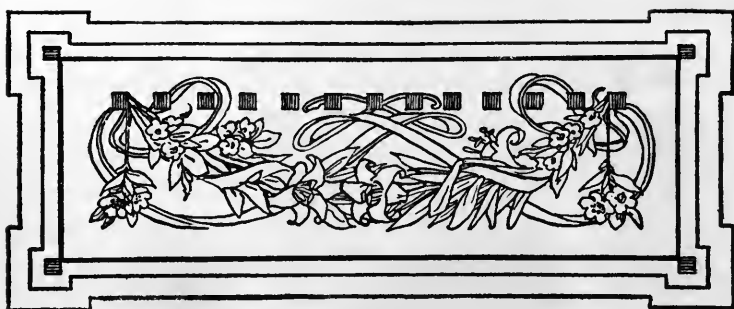
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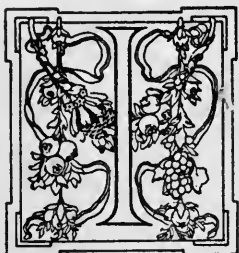
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LECTURE THIRD

RUSKIN; AS ART CRITIC AND MORAL- IST, WITH SOME PERSONAL REMINISCENCES



AM to speak of Ruskin both as an art critic and a moral teacher, but I shall interweave one or two reminiscences which are now, alas! among the distant *præterita*.

I shall deal with general characteristics rather than details, and try and give you a few photographs of character. But since I place Ruskin so high amongst the teachers of the Nineteenth Century—indeed very near the summit-level—the language of praise must give place to a strictly judicial estimate. We are all of us the richer because he lived and taught; we should therefore be able to answer the questions, what is it that we owe to him? and what is the measure of our debt?

In answer to these questions, it may be said

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first of all that no one ever emphasized more clearly than Ruskin did the distinction between the provinces of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good; whether on the map of human knowledge, or in the realm of appreciation and attainment. No one has shewn so well their inner affinities, and the ties which bind them together. He could never have written, as Keats did,

Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

To a dictum so one-sided, he would have replied by a direct negative; and both in writing and in conversation, from first to last, he unfolded the distinction between the two provinces, clearly and unmistakably. But he also knew their correspondences; and shewed us how to pass from the one to the other with ease, adroitness, and inevitableness. He unfolded—as I think few, if any, have done so well—their inner relationships, their underlying unity, and abiding harmony. This gave precision, as well as breadth and comprehensiveness, to his teaching. I may even say of it that it was ultimately “compacted” to others, by “that which every joint supplied” to himself.

Mention should next be made of his unique gift of varied intuition; in other words, his power of getting at once, and without effort, below the surface of things—discarding their conventional aspects, and discerning deep principles under-

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neath. Take this in connection with the growth of his character, the unfolding of his genius in many different directions, and the consequent changes which occurred in his point of view. You will find the germ of his latest teaching within some of his earliest opinions, and fragments of his youthful judgments surviving in his final sayings as to Nature and Man; but all of them expanded, modified, at times transfigured. So that, what a surface critic deems (and often calls) an inconsistency—in matters of Art, Religion, or Politics—is really a sign of its opposite, with the added evidence of development. As one of the best of our recent writers has said, “The highest consistency is inconsistent. The greatest teacher cannot write twice alike; because, from his second point of view he sees more, and has more to say.”

Some persons have thought that Ruskin's utterances—both on Art, and Political Economy—are dogmatic and dictatorial, having about them an infallibilist air. It may be so; but should we wonder at it? It is a characteristic of all strong men that they speak with confidence of the conclusions that they have reached, and the principles they hold. And we should test all that Ruskin (more, perhaps, than any of his contemporaries) has said in the light of its evolution; of the opinions that originated, and the circumstances that gave it shape. A knowledge

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of his career, especially as unfolded in his own fragments of autobiography—in *Præterita*, *Fors Clavigera*, the *Arrows of the Chase*, and *Hortus Inclusus*—will illustrate this.

As I have alluded to his views on Political Economy, it may be added that his teaching on this subject—stripped of a few extravagances—is really very simple, and at its root may be indorsed by those who cannot follow him in all his inferences and practical schemes. The following are a few of his sentences on the subject:

“As Domestic Economy regulates the arts and habits of a household, Political Economy regulates those of a Society or State. It is neither an art, nor a science, but a system of conduct and legislature.” * * “The great law which is to govern the production and distribution of wealth is the law of Co-operation.” * * “Government and Co-operation are the laws of life; anarchy and competition the laws of death.” * * “When I use the word ‘Co-operation,’ I use it as opposed not to masterhood, but to competition.”

The following sentences may not be so universally endorsed, but they are no less true; and if adopted, and acted out beneficently, they would revolutionize our commerce, and raise the whole tone of our social and national life: “Masters are not to undersell each other, nor seek each to get the other’s business, but are all to form one Society, selling under a severe penalty for unjust

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dealing, and at an established price." "And I mean by Co-operation not only fellowship between trading *firms*, but between trading *nations*."

I do not need to expound his Political Economy any farther; except to say this, that it is not only based upon, but that it overflows into, Ethics; and is everywhere interpenetrated by moral truth. For example, in dealing with the true nature of Possession, he teaches that we possess only when we beneficially use what we have for the benefit of others as well as ourselves; and furthermore—paradoxical as it may seem—*we continue to possess* the best part of what we have, after we have given it away. No one understood better than Ruskin did the truth which lies within the apostolic paradox, "Having nothing, and yet possessing all things;" and his unparalleled philanthropy not only to individuals, but to Institutions, Societies and Guilds, reacted on himself. It made him feel a richer man than the nominal possessor of things, with which mere wealth may load the millionaire; who has neither the wit to understand, nor the sympathy to enjoy them. His founding of Museums and creation of Industries, his gifts to Colleges and Schools, are proof of this. The Oxford Drawing School, the Museum at Meersbrook Park, Sheffield, his gifts to Whitelands Women's College, and to the Working Men's College in London; those to the girls' school in the city of Cork, the insti-

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tution of the St. George's Guild, and the subsequent work of the Langdale Linen Industry and the Keswick Art School are its farther developments and outcome. These most munificent gifts have given rise to a multitude of others, of which time would fail me to tell you. Glass industries in London, silver ones at Chipping Hampden, others near Birmingham. But above all William Morris's work and art industries. I need not attempt an inventory of them, but the one thing to be noted is that the founders, and subsequent workers cared nothing for practical return in the way of income, *in comparison with turning out good and beautiful work*. They have all caught their inspiration from Ruskin. They are his spiritual children. During his lifetime Ruskin gifted the most of the fortune which his father left him, £157,000, to public objects and ends; and no modern Englishman has more fully understood, and acted out, the meaning of the motto which became the title of one of George Frederick Watts' most famous pictures, "What I spent, I had; what I saved, I lost; what I gave, I have."

And now (as perhaps you are not all familiar with it) I quote the noble confession of faith which the members of the St. George's Guild—which Ruskin founded—are asked to make (omitting only its eighth and final section):

"I.—I trust in the living God, Father Almighty,

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Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things and creatures, visible and invisible. I trust in the kindness of His law, and the goodness of His work and I will strive to love Him and to keep His law, that I may see His work while I live.

II.—I trust in the nobleness of human nature—in the majesty of its faculties, and the joy of its love. I will strive to love my neighbour as myself; and, even when I cannot, I will act as if I did.

III.—I will labour, with such strength and opportunity as God gives me, for my daily bread; and all that my hand finds to do, I will do it with my might.

IV.—I will not deceive, or cause to be deceived, any human being, for my gain or pleasure; nor hurt, nor cause to be hurt, any human being for my gain or pleasure; nor rob, nor cause to be robbed, any human being for my gain or pleasure.

V.—I will not hurt any living creature needlessly, nor destroy any beautiful thing; but will strive to save and comfort all gentle life, and guard and perfect all natural beauty upon the earth.

VI.—I will strive to raise my own body and soul daily into higher powers of duty and happiness; not in rivalry or contention with others, but for the help, delight and honour of others, and for the joy and peace of my own life.

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VII.—I will obey all the laws of my country faithfully; and the orders of its monarch, so far as such laws and commands are consistent with what I suppose to be the law of God; and when they are not so, or seem in any wise to need change, I will oppose them loyally and deliberately—not with malicious, concealed or disorderly violence.”

I maintain that Ruskin was as great (perhaps a greater) philosophical moralist, than he was a teacher and interpreter of the Beautiful; but he would never have become the ethical teacher he was, had he not exercised his function, through the channel of art-criticism. All that life-long appraisal, that deft art-judgment of his, subserved an ethical end, and was meant to work towards a moral purpose; not explicitly, seldom directly or ostensibly; but always implicitly, indirectly, and thus the more unerringly. He could not speak of a forgotten artist, or deal with a great picture—whether well or little known—without introducing this. And so, in season and out of season, all life-long, he threw emphasis on the value of patient toil, of conscientious and honest labour, according to one's highest light. He believed in the everlastingness of all that was good and true, its endurance in the lives of others; a transmitted power sent forth from the worker when his work was done. He affirmed the supremacy and immortality of goodness. Art was nothing to him

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if it was not an aid to a refined and noble life. Thus his aim was to be an interpreter of the laws of conduct, more than an appraiser of things beautiful, and his passionate desire was to succeed in this.

Over and over again he said to us that a well-built character was the greatest of all possible human treasures; and that the supreme question for all of us was not "what do we possess?" but "what do our possessions do for us?"; not "how much have they cost us?," but "how do they benefit others?" If you carefully read *Modern Painters*, *The Stones of Venice*, *Fors Clavigera*, and *Unto this Last*, you hear throughout these volumes the voice of the prophet, the seer, the moralist of all time, the teacher and interpreter of conduct. It is in this sense that I affirm that he was a great philosopher, not, observe, a mere lover of wisdom, but one who lived and moved and had his being in it; and it is for this reason that his writings contain so much "fine gold." Who, I ask, has unfolded the laws of the world in which we live, in relation to human action, more clearly, adequately, fully; or given us a better key by which we may for ourselves unlock its more hidden treasures? Wordsworth did this in many wonderful ways; but, as a teacher who has helped to adjust for us the harmony between Man and Nature, to bring the inner world of feeling imagination thought and conduct into continu-

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ous and wise *rapport* with the external world in which we live, I consider that Ruskin has done us a still greater service.

In the mere recital, and portrayal, of the glories of the outer Universe—in mountains, clouds, seas, rivers, woods, meadows, and flowers—disclosing this in magnificent and lordly prose, he touches the inner springs of life (because the two realms are fundamentally kindred), bringing us out of the artificiality in which we get so often entangled by trifles, befogged by prejudice, or become the slaves of fashion. Ruskin has helped us to apprehend the abiding reality of things, and has taught us farther what to see in age with the bright keen eye of youth, and the joyous intuitive apprehension of little children. It is true that Wordsworth explained (I quote from his preface to *The Excursions*)

How exquisitely the individual mind
* * * to the external world
Is fitted, and how exquisitely, too,
The external world is fitted to the mind.

and again, in the poem on *Tintern Abbey*, he pleads with us:

to recognize
In Nature, and the language of the sense
The anchor of our purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of the heart, and soul
Of all our moral being,

But I think we may describe Ruskin's teachings as to the influence of Nature over man in

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the language which Wordsworth used of his wonderful Sister's influence:

She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
And humble hopes and delicate fears,
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,
And love, and hope, and joy.

He taught us that, in order to understand Nature aright, we must become as little children. We must approach her with reverent wistfulness, with thankful joyousness, and in a "wise passiveness." We must come to her trustfully yet enquiringly, with tranquil solicitude and a glad receptiveness.

Then, further, while the main or central truths which he teaches are as simple as they are profound, and can be easily apprehended by anyone who is docile and unsophisticated, because they "lie foursquare to all the winds that blow," there is perhaps no writer on Art whose casual remarks, and passing commentary, or *obiter dicta* are so suggestive, illuminative, and inspiring.

It is a notable thing in Ruskin's career that beginning as a student of Art, he soon saw—as few have done—that initiation into its true principles will lead us far beyond it; that it conducts, and must conduct, to the central principles of morality. I give you a list of these as I used to put them before the students of philosophy at St. Andrews: truthfulness, sincerity, honesty,

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elevation, nobleness, reverence, reticence, admiration, magnanimity, piety, obedience. Take the last of these. I ask who outside the roll of Palestinian seers has taught us better, or so well, the grand virtue of obedience to law and order? Who has emphasized more clearly the joy of such submission and fealty? Perpetual self-assertion of our ambitious littleness tempts many of us to rise in insurrection against the gracious limits of that order, and leads others to rebel against the primary laws of conduct, listening to siren voices, and yielding to the bribe, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." But the glad surrender of self to a law that is higher than we are, joyous obedience to it, glorying in being its servant, *that*—according to Ruskin—is the pathway to felicity for each individual man, woman, and child. Nay, more, it is the royal road to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, in the highest degree, and for the longest time, if only our political economists would let them know it!

Along with this, there is another duty on which he lays emphasis, viz.: a cheerful recognition of the fact that others around us are achieving what we can never accomplish, that they are now above us and will remain above us; and therefore that our business is not to envy them—far less to try vainly to outstrip and dislodge them from their pre-eminence, or put in a claim to be as good as they are—but simply to look

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with unenvious eye on their achievements, to be taught by their successes, and to rejoice in them even more than in our own. Were such a spirit realized in practice, would not this be a better world to live in, than that of jostling competition, of feverish struggle, of rival interests, and insane conflict?

I think I am right in saying that, in respect to these things, the influence of Ruskin is now greater than it was while he lived. He has stirred up hundreds and thousands of young men and maidens, of old men and children, to rejoice in their work, finding it "a joy for ever;" he taught his contemporaries, and he is now teaching his successors, the blessedness of self-forgetful labour; he has cut out from the ambition of scores of people the sordid craving for accumulation, the love of mere display, the longing to be "in the swim," whether of fashion or frivolity; he has broken up their chase of illusive good. And so, his whole life being a protest against the current materialism of his time, he has put a new meaning into the words of a predecessor,

We live by admiration, hope, and love.

As to his influence as a teacher in the realm of Art, it is enough to say that he inaugurated a new era of criticism. He succeeded in banishing the old canons of taste; he revolutionized the judgments and sympathies of his fellow country-

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men; he taught them that Art has a mission as great as Philosophy, Science, and the Belles-Lettres; that its function is to educate as well as to delight, and to delight by educating. He thus shews us that all noble Art is a portrayal less or more of the inherent truth of things, of that vital strength and beauty which underlie appearances. He has taught us that when we apprehend the ideal within the actual, or beyond and above it, we ascend to what Tennyson calls "the roof and crown of things;" or—to put it otherwise—we pass into the Temple's inner shrine. Furthermore that, while the perception of Beauty elicits admiration, it should lead on to homage, and end in worship; because, as he put it, "all great Art is praise."

I shall say nothing about his poems; but, as a writer of the most poetic prose, he was certainly the chief Englishman of the nineteenth century, far superior, for example, to De Quincey. Mr. Mather has said, truly as well as beautifully, that "as a writer, strength and beauty are in his right hand." Mr. Spillman and Mr. Frederic Harrison both speak of him as the chief wielder of our English prose. It is true that he had notable masters, and many sources of inspiration; the English Bible, with our noble Anglo-Saxon Prayer-book, Homer, Hooker, Scott, Carlyle; but his own style is unique and unborrowed from anyone. It is the outcome of spirit-vision, the

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language of a soul on fire, the clear, indubious utterance of one who felt the truth of the saying, "There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification," of a spirit familiar with many an apocalypse of the Beautiful. His winged words were the inevitable outcome of his "open vision." Ruskin's language is lucid, because his thought was always clear. Had the latter been obscure or clouded, the former would have been intricate, perplexed, or halting. But in all his writings the seer, the artist, and the poet combined to make the stylist. He used to lament that people cared more for the form than for the substance of his teaching. "All my life," he said, "I have been talking to the people; and they care not for the matter, but only for the manner of my words. I find I have been talking too much, and doing too little." And he was so modest as to his success in writing descriptive prose that he said Tennyson had beaten him entirely as a delineator, or "illustrator of natural beauty."

Mr. Frederic Harrison has directed our special attention to the right noble description of the Old Tower of Calais Church in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*, which is certainly one of the grandest things Ruskin ever wrote. I shall not quote it, but rather—with the same end in view as Mr. Harrison's—read you part of a letter written from Laon in the north of France, and

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descriptive of it, which I am sure you have never heard, as it has not been printed. It is, I think, equal to the best that has seen the light of day; and it is also a good example of the length of his sentences, which do not seem long, and which could with difficulty be shortened. You are perhaps aware that there is a sentence in *Modern Painters*, in which there are 628 words, with 73 commas and semicolons! What I am going to read is not of that portentous length, but it was written at a single sitting, and it is an instance of his earlier style surviving in later years.

“Laon, August 12, 1882.

“We had a hardish day from Calais here, and did not get in till supper time. Clean beds, and windows looking out on the country, freshened us for early coffee; and we have been out from half past seven till half past ten, exploring in real French morning sunshine. Except Assissi, I never saw a place like it; cathedral, for that matter, out and out grander than Assissi would be without the supporting terraces; instead of them it has avenues of plane trees, above a sloping garden of mixed vineyard and flowers; and the town—cheerfully old-fashioned, and lively, yet contented—with the quaintest pepper-boxes, and cruets, and cats-ears of ins and outs on roofs, and ups and downs in walls; and on the really old outside walls, the houses mixed up among the

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buttresses and towers; with a window here, and a balcony there; and a bit of arch built in, and a bit of bow built out; and a peep-hole in the roof, and a secret stair in the corner; and nooks, and crooks, and outlooks, and sidelooks; and beautiful bits of garden kept gay, but not trim; and vines, and pear-trees drooping all over with big pears; and lovely moss and ivy, and feathery green, and house-leek, and everything that ever grew on walls, or in chinks; and every now and then a cluster of spring bluebells, rooted on a buttress angle and seven feet high themselves, like fox-gloves made saints of, and going off into raptures of chime; and little wells dripping into cisterns, and recesses with steps down and roofs over; for all the world like Siena, with sweet gush and tinkle and gleam of running surface, and presently all aglow again with marigolds and purple clematis, and scarlet geraniums, and blue distance seen all beyond. * * *

“Yours, John Ruskin.”

This letter may be followed by two passages from *Modern Painters*. The first is his description of the Roman Campagna:

“Perhaps there is no more impressive scene on earth than the solitary extent of the Campagna of Rome under evening light. Let the reader imagine himself for the moment withdrawn from the sounds and motion of the living world, and sent forth alone into this wild and

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wasted plain. The earth yields and crumbles beneath his foot, tread he never so lightly; for its substance is white, hollow, and carious, like the dusty wreck of the bones of men. The long, knotted grass waves and tosses feebly in the evening wind, and the shadows of its motion shake feverishly along the banks of ruin that lift themselves to the sunlight. Hillocks of mouldering earth heave around him, as if the dead beneath were struggling in their sleep. Scattered blocks of black stone, four-square remnants of mighty edifices, not one left upon another, lie upon them, to keep them down. A dull purple poisonous haze stretches level along the desert, veiling its spectral wrecks of many ruins, on whose rents the red light rests, like dying fire on defiled altars; the blue ridge of the Alban Mount lifts itself against a solemn space of green, clear, quiet sky; watch towers of dark clouds stand steadfastly along the promontories of the Apennines; from the plain to the mountains, the shattered aqueducts, pier beyond pier, melt into the darkness like shadowy and countless troops of funeral mourners, passing from a nation's grave." (From the Preface to *Modern Painters*, 1843.)

One instinctively compares this with Browning's characterization of the Campagna in one of his lyrics. His poem is entitled *Two in the Campagna*, of which the following are three stanzas:

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I wonder do you feel to-day
As I have felt, since hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

* * * * *

The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air—
Rome's ghost since her decease.

Such life there, through such length of hours,
Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting nature have her way,
While Heaven looks from its towers!

Again take what Ruskin wrote about the clouds of the sky. "It is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky. It is the part of creation in which Nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him and teaching him, than in any other of her works, and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. Every *essential* purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days or thereabouts, a great, ugly black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And, instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives when Nature is not producing scene after scene, pic-

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ture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty; and it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or beauty, has this being done for him constantly. The sky is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart, for the soothing of it, and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful, never the same for two moments together; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity."

Again this is the way in which he describes a cliff: "A group of trees changes the colour of its leafage from week to week, and its position from day to day; it is sometimes languid with heat, and sometimes heavy with rain; the torrent swells or falls in shower or sun; the best leaves of the foreground may be dined upon by cattle, or trampled by unwelcome investigators of the chosen scene. But the cliff can neither be eaten nor trampled down; neither bowed by the shadow, nor withered by the heat; it is always ready for us, when we are inclined to labour; will always wait for us, when we would rest; and, what is best of all, will always talk to us when we are inclined to converse. With its own patient and

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victorious presence, cleaving daily through cloud after cloud, and reappearing still through the tempest drift, lofty and serene through the passing rents of blue, it seems partly to rebuke, and partly to guard, and partly to calm and chasten, the agitations of the feeble human soul that watches it; and that must be indeed a dark perplexity, or a grievous pain, which will not be in some degree enlightened or relieved by the vision of it, when the evening shadows are blue on its foundation, and the last rays of the sunset resting on the fair height of its golden fortitude."

These will suffice as examples of Ruskin's prose style. Returning now to his teaching, to re-emphasize some of its features.

It may be said that Ruskin was as notable a missionary as ever lived, pleading all his life, by speech and writing, for the union of the true, the beautiful and the good; but he often felt that he was only a herald, preparing the way for a consummation and result which he himself would never see fulfilled. He once said to me that his was "the voice of one crying in wilderness," and that he could not even say that "the kingdom," of which he desired the advent, was "at hand." But think what we owe to him, as the appraiser of works by the forgotten dead, the interpreter and eulogist of artists disesteemed in the past; Tintoret, Botticelli, Carpaccio, Luini, Verrocchio, Donatello, and many another down to Turner.

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He said he was satisfied with appraising the work of others, disinterring buried reputations; but how did he teach us of this? As George Eliot said, "with the inspiration of the Hebrew prophets." And so, the dignity of labour, the blessedness of honest toil, were taught anew. "Work, work, work; 'tis better than what you work to get," wrote Mrs. Browning, and Ruskin's whole life was an illustration of it. He was by far the most voluminous and versatile English writer of the nineteenth century—and no one has done so much as he did by his writings to raise the tone of feeling and judgment as to the Beautiful within the Anglo-Saxon race. No one has done so much to shew *what it is, and where it is to be found*; what fosters, and what retards it; giving us almost a new reading and commentary on its laws. It is not too much to say that, from the date of the publication of *Modern Painters* onward, his two *dicta* that "all great Art is a Revelation," and that "all great Art is Praise," have been attested by results.

Grant that he occasionally pushed the truths he taught too far. All who originate new departures do that. They cannot help doing it, and they would not effect a change in the current ideas of their time if they did not do it, if they did not overstep the *via media*, or *juste milieu*. No one ever starts a fresh movement without carrying it at first too far; especially if he is a

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many-sided genius. Now note the range of the subjects which Ruskin has studied, and on which he has written to purpose; philosophy, especially that of ethics, theology, political economy, history, architecture, painting, sculpture, engraving, agriculture, education, sociology, the sciences of mineralogy, geology and botany, music, mythology, prosody, criticism, topography, etc., etc. He was almost as encyclopedic as Aristotle. Then note his varied work as a practical reformer. Not content with merely preaching his evangel, he formed a Society for the spread of these ideas, which he felt to be fundamentally true, and yet were disesteemed. That Society he has helped by numerous gifts. No teacher has ever been so lavish of gifts to contemporaries, and to posterity.

There is no doubt that many of his works will live as long as the English language is spoken; and it is note-worthy that in them all, while there is much trenchant criticism, there is nothing selfish or sinister, or envious, or cruel. Severe as was his wrath against all that degrades human nature, he never wrote a sentence which he afterwards regretted; although he outgrew—and acknowledged that he outgrew—his earlier opinions, and his juvenile way of stating things. It was said by him and by Matthew Arnold (whom we may bracket together in this respect) that they never wrote a sentence which they

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wished to hide from the light of day, or desired the recording angel to erase. Ruskin once wrote to our common friend, James Smetham, "I never wrote a private letter to any human being which I would not let a bill-sticker chalk up six feet high on Hyde Park wall, and stand myself in Piccadilly and say 'I did it!'" And his published letters, multitudinous as they are—in the *Arrows of the Chase*, *Hortus Inclusus*, etc.—are not a tithe of the number which he wrote.

On the 24th December 1899, I visited Brantwood for the last time during Ruskin's life, less than a month before he died. I hardly expected to see him, as he could not walk, or even speak much; but, with the same kindliness he shewed in former years, he asked me to come up, and I spent some time in the delightful turret-room, so well known to all his visitors, whence the view of Coniston Lake and the mountains beyond it is so grand. His favourite birds were at his window, and—as by some subtile affinity—soothed him by their presence, and consoled him by their twittering song; while the gracious silence of old age was, in some respects, more impressive than the many-sided speech of earlier years had been. I was told to continue talking, though he responded little, for he liked to listen, when he could not speak. His face, his most impressive hands, his wonderful eyes, and every motion of his frame were expressive beyond measure. I

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knew it was a farewell meeting, but there was no sorrow, only a sense of tranquillity and peace.

Three weeks afterward he had an attack of influenza, and passed from the land of the living. I went up to the funeral at Coniston. So soon as I knew that he had died, I sent to Florence for a "crown of wild olive" to lay upon his tomb. It did not arrive on the burial day, and I had to content myself with writing that motto on a sheet of cardboard, along with "Unto this Last," which was laid with many another offering on his grave. It was a rainy, wintry, day; Wetherlam, and the surrounding mountains being all wreathed with January mist. The coffin had been brought round from Brantwood on the previous evening, that his remains might lie in the church for twenty hours before interment; and those of us who arrived early saw the catafalque with violets and lilies of the valley round the head, the body covered with wreaths of the yellow and red roses he loved so well, and surrounded with many other decorative winter flowers. A Westmoreland lady-friend sang the burial hymns; amongst them one by Canon Rawnsley, who has written nothing better in verse than the memorial lines called forth on that occasion. The service ended, his body was borne reverently to its last resting place, and lowered noiselessly—"earth to earth, dust to dust"—in a sort of cryptic columbarium, its

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sides lined with polished stones of white marble. It is close to the graves of the three sisters—Margaret, Mary, and Susanah Beaver,—to whom we owe the *Fronde Agrestes* and *Hortus Inclusus*. Year by year, in their old age, when they could no longer visit Brantwood, Ruskin used to send down one of his Turner drawings to be kept by them as long as they liked, and then exchanged for another, just “to give pleasure to the young old ladies of the Thwaite.” At the funeral were many representatives of those who owed so much to him—working-men, and working-women, members of the guilds and societies he had called into being; and they realized at his grave—as perhaps never before—the significance of the words, “Blessed are the dead.”

Certainly, “being dead” Ruskin “yet speaketh.” He has spoken many words that cannot die, gracious household words, bringing out of his treasury things new and old. His mind and heart were ever opulent, populous with thought. They were also marvellously opalescent, and

Caught at every turn
The colours of the sun.

Still more especially, as some one has said, “his life was as a tree planted by the water-side, that bringeth forth its fruit in due season.”

Et folium ejus non defluit,
Et omnia quaecunque faciat prosperabuntur.



Braun Autotype

J. F. MILLET, *portrait of himself*



Braun Autotype

PASSAGE OF THE WILD GEESE



Drawing, Boston Museum



THE SOWER

Original Lithograph, British Museum



Braun Autotype





Braun Autotype

THE MAN WITH THE HOE



Braun Autotype

THE ANGELUS [1859]







LECTURE FOUR
THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHER-
HOOD, ESPECIALLY DANTE
GABRIEL ROSSETTI, WITH
REMINISCENCES.



It is comparatively easy for anyone now to trace the rise and development of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of England. There are scores of books, and articles in magazines, devoted to it. Only three members of the original group survive—the veteran painter, Holman Hunt, and William Rossetti, the brother of the artist-poet, being the most important.

I think it may be of use to you if I outline the main features of the movement. I believe that a succinct, and very important record of it will yet be given to the world in the light of all that it has led to. But what I have now to do to the art students in Chicago is to unfold its characteristics in the briefest manner possible. It was

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a reaction, a protest, and a new tendency. There was rebellion in its earlier efforts, which were so ignorantly dealt with by those critics whose judgments were enslaved by tradition and conventionality. A most important point to be noted, however, is this. It was not only an artistic but a literary revolt, and a poetical renaissance. It was a new way of looking at, of appraising and reproducing both Man and Nature, which found a simultaneous expression in all the departments or sub-sections of the Beautiful; in Poetry, Music, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, and Decorative Handicraft.

Many have asked a question which it is difficult to answer, Who was the founder of the Brotherhood? Had it a single originator? or did several co-operate in starting it? I think that the latter of the two suggestions is the correct one. No one has written of it better, or so well as, Ruskin in his essay on Pre-Raphaelitism, first published in 1851, eight years after the first volume of *Modern Painters* came out; and from it I shall give you a brief quotation.

He refers to the "instinct which was urging every painter in Europe at the same moment to his true duty—the faithful representation of all objects of historical interest, or of natural beauty, existent at the period; representation such as might at once aid the advance of the sciences, and keep a faithful record of every monument of

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past ages, which was likely to be swept away in the approaching eras of revolutionary change." * * * He goes on to say: "Know once for all that a poet on canvas is exactly the same species of creature as a poet in song, and nearly every error in our methods of teaching [Art] will be done away with. For who among us now thinks of bringing men up to be poets? of producing poets by any kind of general recipe or method of cultivation? * * * But it being required to produce a poet on canvas, what is our way of setting to work? We begin, in all probability, by telling the youth of fifteen or sixteen, that Nature is full of faults, and that he is to improve her; but that Raphael is perfection, and that the more he copies Raphael the better; that after much copying of Raphael, he is to try what he can do himself in a Raphaelesque, but yet original manner; that is to say to try to do something very clever, all out of his own head, but yet this clever something is to be properly subjected to Raphaelesque rules, is to have a principal light occupying one-seventh of its space, and a principal shadow occupying one-third of the same; that no two people's heads in the picture are to be turned the same way, and that all the personages represented are to possess ideal beauty of the highest order, which ideal beauty consists partly in a Greek outline of nose, partly in proportions expressible in decimal fractions between the lips

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and chin; but mostly in that degree of improvement which the youth of sixteen is to bestow upon God's work in general. This I say is the kind of teaching which through various channels, Royal Academy lecturings, press criticisms, public enthusiasm, and not least by solid weight of gold, we give to our young men. And, we wonder we have no painters!"

Then follows a magnificent comparison of the work of two of the landscape painters of England. He supposes them "both free in the same field in a mountain valley. One sees everything, small and large, with about the same clearness; mountains and grasshoppers alike; the leaves on the branches, the veins on the pebbles, the bubbles in the stream; but he can remember nothing and invent nothing. Patiently he sets himself to his mighty task; abandoning at once all thought of seizing transient effects, or giving general impression of that which his eyes present to him in microscopical dissection, he chooses some small portion out of the infinite scene, and calculates with courage the number of weeks which must elapse before he can do justice to the intensity of his perceptions, or the fulness of matter in his subject.

"Meantime the other has been watching the change of the clouds, and the march of the light along the mountain sides; he beholds the entire scene in broad soft masses of true gradation, and

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the very feebleness of his sight is in some sort an advantage to him, in making him more sensible of the aerial mystery of distance, and hiding from him the multitudes of circumstances which it would have been impossible for him to represent. But there is not one change in the casting of the jagged shadows along the hollows of the hills, but it is fixed on his mind forever; not a flake of spray has broken from the sea of cloud about their bases, but he has watched it as it melts away, and could recall it to its lost place in heaven by the slightest effort of his thought. Not only so, but thousands and thousands of such images, of older scenes, remain congregated in his mind, each mingling in new associations with those now visibly passing before him, and these again confused with other images of his own ceaseless, sleepless imagination, flashing by in sudden troops. Fancy how his paper will be covered with stray symbols and blots, and undecipherable shorthand; as for his sitting down to "draw from Nature," there was not one of the things which he wished to represent that stayed for so much as five seconds together, but none of them escaped for all that. They are sealed up in that strange storehouse of his; he may take one of them out, perhaps, this day twenty years, and paint it in his dark room, far away. * * * Grant to the first considerable inventive power, with exquisite sense of colour;

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and give to the second, in addition to all his other faculties, the eye of an eagle; and the first is John Everett Millais, the second Joseph William Turner."

Farther on in the same essay we read: "Towards the close of last century among the various drawings executed according to the quiet manner of the time, in greyish blue, with brown foregrounds, some began to be noticed as exhibiting rather more than ordinary diligence and delicacy, signed W. Turner. * * * Gradually and cautiously the blues became mingled with delicate green, and then with gold; the browns in the foreground became first more positive, and then were slightly mingled with other local colours; while the touch, which had at first been heavy and broken, like that of the ordinary drawing masters of the time, grew more and more refined and expressive until it lost itself in a method of execution often too delicate for the eye to follow, rendering, with a precision before unexampled, both the texture and the form of every object. The style may be considered as perfectly formed about the year 1800, and it remained unchanged for twenty years.

"During that period the painter had attempted, and with more or less success had rendered, every order of landscape subject, but always on the same principle, subduing the colours of Nature into a harmony of which the key-notes are grey-

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ish green and brown; pure blue, and delicate golden yellow being admitted in small quantity as the lowest and highest limits of shade and light; and bright local colours in extremely small quantity in figures and other minor accessories.

“Pictures executed on such a system are not, properly speaking, works in *colour* at all; they are studies of light and shade, in which both the shade and the distance are rendered in the general hue which best expresses their warmth and solidity. This advantage may just as well be taken as not, in studies of light and shadow to be executed by the hand; but the use of two, three, or four colors, always in the same relations and places, does not in the least constitute the work a study of colour, any more than the brown engravings of the *Liber Studiorum*; nor would the idea of colour be in general more present to the artist’s mind when he was at work on one of these drawings, than when he was using pure brown in the mezzotint engraving. But the idea of space, warmth, and freshness being not successfully expressible in a single tint, and perfectly expressible by the admission of three or four, he allows himself that advantage when it is possible, without in the least embarrassing himself with the actual colour of the objects to be represented. A stone in the foreground might in Nature have been cold grey, but it will be drawn nevertheless, of a rich brown, because it is

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in the foreground; a hill in the distance might in Nature be purple with heath, or golden with furze, but it will be drawn, nevertheless, of a cool grey, because it is in the distance.

“This at least was the general theory, carried out with great severity in many both of the drawings and pictures executed by him during the period; in others more or less modified by the cautious introduction of colour, as the painter felt his liberty increasing; for the system was evidently never considered as final, or as anything more than a means of progress; the conventional easily manageable colour was visibly adopted, only that his mind might be at perfect liberty to address itself to the acquirement of the first and most necessary knowledge in all Art, that of form. But as form, in landscape, implies vast bulk and space, the use of the tints which enabled him best to express them was actually auxiliary to the mere drawing; and therefore not only permissible, but even necessary; while more brilliant and varied tints were never indulged in, except when they might be introduced without the slightest danger of diverting his mind from his principal object. * * *

“The system of his colour being thus simplified, he could address all the strength of his mind to the accumulation of facts of form; his choice of subject and methods of treatment are therefore as various as his colour is simple. No sub-

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ject was too low or too high for him. * * *

“What general feeling, it may be asked incredulously, can forward all this? This—the greatest of all feelings—an utter forgetfulness of self. Throughout the whole period with which we are at present concerned he appears a man of sympathy absolutely infinite, or sympathy so all-embracing that I know nothing but that of Shakespeare comparable with it. * * * This is the root of his greatness, and it follows that this sympathy must give him a subtle power of expression, even of the character of mere material things, such as no other painter ever possessed.”

Ruskin then notes what he calls “one other characteristic of Turner’s mind at this period, viz., its reverence for talent in others” and his consequent modesty. “The chief characteristic of the works of Turner’s second period,” he says, were “a new energy inherent in the mind of the painter, diminishing the repose and exalting the force and fire of his conceptions, and the presence of colour, as at least an essential, and often a principal, element of design.” “I have no doubt that the immediate reasons of this change was the impression made upon him by the colours of the continental skies * * * . Every subject was thenceforward primarily conceived in colour.”

Ruskin enlarges on Turner’s marvellous memory, both as to form and colour, its unerring re-

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ports of past occurrences and experience; his being able to compose some of his greatest pictures from memory, without a single glance at Nature. But he also points out that towards the close of the second, which was the central period of his labour, "trusting for ten or twelve years almost entirely to memory, while living mostly in London, he became conventional, and between 1830 and 1840 painted many pictures altogether unworthy of him. But he was not thus to close his career. In the summer of 1840 or 1841, he undertook another journey into Switzerland. It was at least forty years since he had first seen the Alps, and the perfect repose of his youth returned to his mind; all conventionality being done away with by the impression he received from the Alps after his long separation from them." * * * He adds that his work done then and in following years "bears the same relation to those of the rest of his life that the colours of sunset do to those of the day; and will be recognized as the noblest landscapes ever yet conceived by human intellect."

When Dante Gabriel Rossetti, uneasy because of the delay that occurred before he could be admitted into the painting-school of the Royal Academy, wrote, in the year 1848, to Ford Maddox Brown to know if he could be received as a student of his, the first step in the formation of the Brotherhood was taken. Rossetti had ap-

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parently been impressed by the cartoons which Maddox Brown had exhibited at Westminster Hall four years previously, and by others of his works, which seemed to him more original than those of the teachers under whom he would have to study at the Academy. Maddox Brown was only a few years older than his correspondent. He had attained to no distinction as yet, and remained outside the circle of art-success all his life. He was surprised at the novel request, and the story is current that he fancied he was being made the subject of a practical joke; and that, when he went to the house of his correspondent, he provided himself with a strong stick, which he might use for defence if assaulted unawares. Rossetti was received as a pupil, and became a life-long friend. But before that memorable meeting he had got to know another youth, William Holman Hunt; and they together soon became acquainted with a third, John Everett Millais. These three young men were the original members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Others soon gathered round this nucleus. As Wordsworth and Coleridge, the founders of the earlier but somewhat parallel movement in Poetry and Letters, had associates and co-mates — many of whom were ignorant of the source of that “stream of tendency” which bore them all onwards — many in the new art-world of England were influenced by the same

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tide; although they did not enter into, or were not enrolled within, the brotherhood.

That brotherhood was moulded to a very large extent by the time in which it arose. Its characteristics were partly due to the fortunate decay of the old system by which artists had pupils in a school which carried on, and carried out, their work; the master forming the style of his pupils. It was not, however, by these temporary masters that such men as Hunt and Millais were influenced, but by the young enthusiasts who studied with them. On the whole we must regard Holman Hunt as the leader of the School, although not its founder. As already said, there was in one sense no particular founder; but upon this point you should consult the two gossipy but fascinating volumes by Holman Hunt, in which you will find numerous side-lights as to the nature of the brotherhood, as well as an authentic story of its origin. It is also worthy of note that this fraternity was not a syndicate, or academic union. Being a brotherhood it was of necessity a transient bond of union, and sympathetic fellowship. Those who are curious in the search for parallels may find a resemblance to it in the delightful University brotherhoods established at Oxford and Cambridge in England; such as that remarkable club nick-named "Old Mortality" at Oxford, of which your new English Ambassador at Washington, Mr. Bryce, was one

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of the original members, along with the poet Swinburne, and others; and that goodly fellowship of "The Apostles" at the sister University at Cambridge, which has been quite recently described in an admirable volume by Mrs. Brookfield. It included Tennyson, and his friend Arthur Hallam (of *In Memoriam*), Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton the friend and biographer of Keats, Frederick Denison Maurice, and many another celebrity. But I go further back for the best parallel to the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood by a process of elective affinity. It is to the wondrous friendship of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and to their superlative work—wholly ignored at the time by the accredited critics of the hour — which dated from the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798, and gave rise to one of the most remarkable changes as well as revivals in English Literature since its commencement. It is in that monumental, and as yet unexhausted, literary revival that we find the great predecessor of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in English Art. But it had also an artistic prototype in the French literary movement inaugurated by Sainte-Beuve and his friends, in their admiration for Victor Hugo and others. A group of young enthusiasts, scarcely out of their teens, their intuitions of the ideal transcending all past achievement, but with a sure sense of coming leadership, pro-

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gress and achievement, made this Brotherhood one of the noblest ever formed. It was an association based on common aims and aspirations, on a return to Nature and a loyal following of her, escaping from the bondage of convention, and reproducing the actual world, adding the new hints it contained of the ideal.

Will you also note this fact that, while the Brotherhood was composed of a remarkable group of men, the way in which they set about their work, and the manner in which the conviction of their artistic mission awoke in them, was still more remarkable.

Ford Maddox Brown wrote much in his diary as to this. Eg., "4th September, 1847, glancing over the pages of Sir James Mackintosh's *History of England* I came upon a passage 'it is scarcely to be wondered at that English at this period should have become the judicial language of the century, ennobled as it had been by the genius of Chaucer', this at once fixed me. I immediately saw a vision of Chaucer, reading his poems to knights and ladies fair, to the King and Court, amid air and sunshine." He at first thought of calling his picture *The Seeds of the English Language*; and, afterwards, *The Seeds and Fruits of the English Language*. As an artist who then, and afterwards, experienced many of "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," it is interesting to record what he wrote of it in

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that year. "Very likely it may only add one more to the kicks I have received from Fortune." But "of one thing she cannot rob me, the pleasure I have already extracted — distilled I may say — from the work itself. Warned by experience, I have learned not to trust only to hope for my reward, nor consider my toil as a sacrifice; but to value the pleasure, the pleasure I daily receive from working out a subject after my own heart, a love-offering of my never fruitless past."

Again he wrote "27th December. Thought of a subject as I went along, Wickliff reading his translation of the Bible to John of Gaunt, Chaucer and Gower present." In 1854 he wrote in his journal: "I began the background for *Work*" — one of his greatest pictures — "in the streets of Hampstead, painting them all day for two months, having spent much time in inventing an apparatus." Of his "*Last of England*" — another characteristic subject, because of the pathos and intense humanity displayed in the farewell given to their old home by voyagers to an unknown world — he writes, "This work, representing an outdoor scene, without sunlight, I painted chiefly out of doors, when the snow was lying on the ground."

To show the influence of literary criticism, or rather of literary appraisal, on the development of the work of the Brotherhood with which I am dealing, I turn to Ruskin first of all, and *instar*

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omnium, because of his unrivalled insight into the mannerisms, the triviality, the dreary commonplace, and the dead traditions of the past. It is a noteworthy fact that the first volume of *Modern Painters* — the chief epoch-making book in the annals of Art — was lent to Holman Hunt as a boy, and by him handed on to others, and that its influence over the Brotherhood was supreme. Its fundamental plea “for Truth to Nature” which alone could lead to new departures of any value, its protest against conventionalism, unreality, pretence, and sham of every kind, did more than any picture did, at the outset of the movement, to hasten that return to Nature, which was its watchword.

There have been many movements in literary and philosophical, as well as artistic work which may be described as “returns to Nature.” But perhaps the greatest, because the most explicitly formulated, was that of Ruskin. I used to hear him talk of it with Carlyle at Cheyne Row more than thirty years ago; and I have tried to reproduce their conversation in part. It would at times meander through meadows of pleasantry, then burst into torrents of invective in such sentences as these:

“Nature, Nature,” said Carlyle, “I want to get to Nature.”

“What do you mean by Nature?” replied Ruskin. “I want to get back to it as I saw it in

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my boyhood, when I was taught by my father and mother," said Carlyle. "What kind of a sight was that," replied Ruskin, "if you didn't see that Nature reveals the supernatural; as the whole history of Christendom has been disclosing a divine within the human, as its inmost pulse." "Ah, well, ah, well," said Carlyle, "perhaps you are right. I do not know; for, as one of our poets has said, 'all my mind is troubled with a doubt.'" "But," said Ruskin, "what is to be the end and outcome of all our present turmoil?" "I don't know," said Carlyle; "no man knows. But I am sure of this, the real will survive." "Yes," said Ruskin, "but in what form and of what kind? The real has many aspects, and many counterfeits." "Well, well," said Carlyle, "we must wait, and I am sure that the best of everything in this world will live, even if some of our wisdom grows out of the root of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

But for the work and influence of this brotherhood England would not have known many another artist who was taught by it, and yet did not belong to it by any outward tie of affinity, above all, Frederick Walker.

But note this, that the Society — which was never broken up, but which (like all societies subsequent) dissolved by necessity — was the parent of many artistic tendencies. Millais broke away into a magnificent idealised neo-

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realism; Rossetti on the other side into a still more magnificent realistic neo-idealism. Of still living members of the Brotherhood I do not speak; although in the one who remains pre-eminent there is much of both of these tendencies wondrously united, in his last reproduction of an early effort, which will probably go down to posterity, as his greatest work. I refer to Holman Hunt's *Lady of Shallott*.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was a means to an end; not a stepping-stone across a stream; but one in the sense in which Tennyson wrote, that

Men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

Rossetti, Woolner, Maddox Brown, Millais, subsequently left it, on the ground that, having assimilated its best, they had outgrown it, and were able to go on to other things; some more slowly, others more swiftly; but it remained to all of them a landmark, as it had been a rallying point to them as youthful enthusiasts and devotees. They soon saw the inadequacy of the term which had been taken to describe their brotherhood, but it was not discarded, or disowned.

The wistful retrospective gaze of the founders, who saw in those early painters who preceded Raphael the everlasting merits of sincerity, of truthfulness, and a face-to-face vision of

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Nature, as well as a direct and generally true reproduction of what they saw, was an unspeakable gain to the art of England, to the century in which they lived, and which they adorned. When the leaders outgrew their early cult, without feeling its poverty or ignoring its trammels, the average public mind was enabled to rise above contemporary hindrance, and to see visions of a higher ideality than the nation had previously known.

THE JOURNAL OF THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD

In this Journal, kept by its literary member, William Michael Rossetti, from 1849 to 1853, and edited by him in 1900, we have the most authentic record, although not the most graphic picture, of the work the Pre-Raphaelites did. The secretary writes:

“In 1848 there were four young students in the Royal Academy Schools, John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt in the Life-School, Thomas Woolner in the Sculpture-School, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti in the Antique-School. Woolner, born in 1825, was the eldest; Millais, born in 1829, the youngest. These young men were all capable and ambitious; they had all, except Rossetti, exhibited something, to which (more especially in the case of Millais) the Art authorities and the public had proved not wholly indifferent. They enter-

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tained a hearty contempt for much of the Art—flimsy, frivolous, and conventional — which they saw in practice around them; and they wanted to shew what was in them in the way of solid and fresh thought or invention, personal observation, and the intimate study of, and strict observance to Nature. The young men came together, interchanged ideas, and were joined by two other youthful painter-students, James Collinson and Frederick George Stephens, and also myself, who was not an artist. So there were seven men forming the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. * * * There was not much defiance in it, some banter, some sense, a great deal of resolute purpose, a large opening for misrepresentations, and a *carte-blanche* invitation for abuse. After thus constituting themselves, what they had to do was to design, paint, and model, and one of them in especial, Dante Rossetti, to write poetry; and they did it with a will.

Some little while having elapsed, it was determined that one of the Pre-Raphaelite Brothers should be Secretary, and should keep a Journal; and I, as not being taken up by art-work, was pitched upon for the purpose. I accordingly began the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood Journal.

This Journal was entirely my own affair, and was compiled without pre-consulting any of my fellow-members, and without afterwards submitting it to them. * * * It was not in any

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sense a diary personal to myself, and was producible to any member who might choose to ask for it. I don't think anyone ever did. * * *

The extracts here presented are something like a half of the extant MS. It is a highly authentic account of the early stages in a movement which proved of great importance."

* * * * *

The following is a sample of the contents of this Journal.

"Sunday, 20th May, 1849. * * * Woolner came in the evening and shewed us two verses of a new Song he has begun (the first beginning of *My Beautiful Lady*). * * *

"Monday, 21st. * * * Gabriel recited lots of Patmore, Browning, Mrs. Browning, etc. * * *

"23rd, Millais said he had thoughts of painting a hedge (as a subject) to the closest point of imitation, with a bird's nest — a thing which has never been attempted. Another subject he has in his eye is a river sparrow's nest, built (as he says they are) between three reeds." * * *

"July 14th. A contemplated Magazine discussed (that afterwards issued as *The Germ*). The title first suggested, *Monthly Thoughts in Literature and Art*. Other titles thought of were *The Seed*, *The Scroll*, *The Artist*, *Art and Poetry*.

"Nov. 22nd. * * * Patmore said that Tennyson is the greatest *man* he ever came in contact

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with, far greater in his life than in his writing, perfectly sincere and frank, never paying uncandid compliments. Browning takes more pains to please and is altogether much more a man of the world. Patmore thinks that Browning does not value himself so highly as he is rated by Gabriel and me."

"Dec. 8th. Gabriel read *The Princess* through, and both Woolner and he pronounced it the finest poem since Shakespeare, superior even to *Sordello*. To this I demur."

"Tuesday 18th. Tennyson's poem of King Arthur is not yet commenced, though he has been for years past maturing the conception of it; and he intends that it should occupy him some fifteen years." * * *

"Feb. 26th, 1850. * * * Marston says that Browning, before publishing *Sordello*, sent it to him to read, saying that this time, at any rate, the public should not accuse him of being unintelligible!

"Sunday 9th March, 1851. We voted to keep, under the same obligation as a Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood meeting, the birthday of Shakespeare.

"May 13th. Ruskin's explanation of the name 'Pre-Raphaelite' is very sensible.

" 'They intend to return to early days in this point only; that, as far as in them lies, they will draw either what they see, or what they suppose

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might have been the actual facts of the scene they desire to represent, irrespective of any conventional rules of picture-making; and they have chosen their name because all artists did this before Raphael's time — and after Raphael's time they did *not* this, but sought to paint fair pictures rather than represent stern facts; of which the consequence has been that, from Raphael's time to this day, historical art has been in decadence.' * * * "Carlyle the other night, in talking with Woolner, was speaking of Alfred (as he calls Tennyson) and Browning in reference to their embodying their thoughts in verse, when there is so great need of doing things in the directest way possible. 'Alfred,' he said, 'knows how to jingle, but Browning does not.' He spoke, however, of Browning's intellect in the highest terms. He then referred to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood: 'These Pre-Raphaelites they talk of are said to copy the thing as it is, or invent it as they believe it must have been: now there's some sense, and hearty sincerity, in this. It's the only way of doing anything fit to be seen.'" So much for a sample of the entries in this Journal.

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DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

ONLY once had I a long conversation with Rossetti, but it was significant in many ways. I had spent a part of the fourth of May in the year, 1871, with Thomas Carlyle in Cheyne Row, when he talked much of Ruskin and Pre-Raphærites; and I went down afterwards to No. 16 Cheyne Walk, to see Rossetti, an illustrious member of the group. The house is now much changed. You then entered it from the river side, with many of the antique boats or barges visible. No one who ever went in through the old iron gateway can possibly forget it. It was "The Queen's House," traditionally that of Catherine of Braganza, the ill-fated bride of our Charles II, whose initials (C. R.) remained in 1862, on the twisted iron lettering of its seventeenth century back-garden rails. The house, with its wainscot rooms, its spiral staircase, its windows and doorways, was said to have been the work of our architect Christopher Wren. The garden, too, into which I went, a relic of the royal palace-garden, had some fine lime trees in it. The dining-room had several mirrors, and old pictures on the walls, with curious designs, "flower, fruit, and thorn-pieces." The house had a strange history, with many other literary abodes quite near it. At number 4, both Daniel Maclise, the painter, and George Eliot, the novelist, lived and died.

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Sir Thomas Moore, George Herbert, Smollet, Izaak Walton, Sir Isaac Newton, John Locke, Turner, Carlyle, the Kingsleys, George MacDonald, etc., all had lived near at hand.

In this year, 1871, John Everett Millais painted a somewhat remarkable picture, which was hung on the line in the Royal Academy, and fascinated most beholders from its consummate realism. I forget the exact title, but it represented three daughters of a Mr. Armstrong, magnificently dressed, and playing whist within an azalea bower on a summer forenoon. It was a splendid specimen of Millais's colour. When Rossetti began to talk of Art we passed from the "Holy Families" of the past—in which he took the greatest interest—to discuss our modern English work; and I spoke of this picture, I fear with the erratic impulse of youth, for I think I characterized it as "the incarnation of nineteenth century worldliness." Three beautiful English girls devoting a forenoon to whist in a gorgeous azalea bower! What a revelation it was of tendencies astir! Rossetti listened to what I said; and then, in a grave staccato style, replied: "Why do you speak in that way of my old friend's work? It is not his fault that this age is a materialistic one. He finds it as God has permitted it to be, and it is my friend's choice to paint it as it now is." I ventured to say that I did not think that the noblest kind of

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work to do; that the greatest artists of the past invariably tried to lift up their age, and all that was in it, to higher levels; and that it was both vulgar, and dishonouring to Art, to paint such realistic pictures. He answered: "I fear we shall not agree on that point; we should all be both realists and idealists. But, will you come out with your friend into my garden, and see what is to be seen there?" So out we went, and spent some time in that curious place where he had collected so many strange animals.

The impression he made on me on this first visit remained ever afterwards, viz., that his genius was far more idealistic than he himself knew; and yet that he was a solitary man, almost an alien in the artistic fraternity of England.

As to his personal character, all that I saw of him revealed a most chivalrous, sympathetic, honourable man, generous and just, and equally appreciative of his contemporaries as of his great predecessors in the twin regions of Art and Poetry. There was a temperamental intensity in him, which struggled to express itself both in Song, and in plastic Art; and I think that he was at times somewhat embarrassed by his own rich outpourings.

There was a vagueness, a wistfulness, and a dreamy languor, in much of his early work. He lived in a world of ideality; and "followed

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the gleam," as Tennyson puts it, to the very end. He was no copyist, or imitator of reality, not an artistic photographer; but, bringing the light of the ideal into all that he saw of the real, in that glorious atmosphere his pictures were made, and etherialised. I think, he always strove after the ideal; caring little for the actual. And yet he was so natural, so true to Nature at its highest, that in him the two tendencies, were superlatively combined.

In speaking of Rossetti's house and garden I should have mentioned his curious fondness for strange or slightly-known animals. He brought them to his house, placed them in cages, and gave them at the same time the run of his garden; whence, they often strayed into neighbouring ones. He had owls and hedge-pigs, wombats, dormice, kangaroos, armadillos, marmots, squirrels, peacocks, parrots, jackdaws, lizards, and even a zebu! It was an extraordinary collection of nondescripts, and revealed an eccentricity in his own character.

To understand Rossetti aright it should be remembered that he was, in a sense, an alien in England; not by birth, but by inheritance. He was a man of Tuscan blood, who brought into our English land some of the best elements of the Italian race. If you read the record of his life, you will see that he inherited the religious spirit of that race, with the insight which sees beyond

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symbols to that which they shadow forth. And then, with his gracious inheritance on both the father's and the mother's side, he was surrounded in his London home by genial influences which set him free from many a tradition, and from the trammels of conventionality.

Hear how Ruskin writes of him: "I believe his name should be placed first on the list of men, within my own range of knowledge, who have raised and changed the spirit of modern Art; raised it, in absolute attainment; changed it, in direction of temper. Rossetti added to the before accepted systems of colour in painting, one based on the principles of manuscript illumination, which permits his designs to rival the most beautiful qualities of painted glass, without losing either the mystery or the dignity of light and shade. And he was, as I believe it is now generally admitted, the chief intellectual force in the establishment of the modern romantic school in England."

I must add that the intensity of Rossetti's feelings and his passionate subjectivity, drawn out by the very splendour of his imagination, gave a certain sadness and pathos to his Art. His temperament was perfervid, and he never escaped from the circle of his own subjectivity. Hence there was no externalisation of his insight, in objective art-products. He attained, as all the world knows, to wonderful mastery

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as a colourist; but, as to form, he kept to one type—especially one type of female beauty—based on that of the lady who became his wife; and his individuality came out in his continuous portrayal of that face, perhaps more than in the case of any of his contemporaries, Burne-Jones only excepted.

What he did to familiarize his age with the work of some almost forgotten poets, such as Omar Khyam of Persia, and our own Blake, is too well known to require mention here. And now I only add that when we talked of the poets and the artists of the past and present, there was—in every sentence he uttered—brightness, and sympathetic insight, no moroseness, or egotism, or vanity on his part.

HOLMAN HUNT.

OF Holman Hunt, Ruskin says in his *Art of England*, when comparing him with Dante Gabriel Rossetti: “In all living schools it chanced often that the disciple is greater than his master; and it is always the first sign of a dominant and splendid intellect, that it knows of whom to learn.” * * * He speaks of Rossetti’s “sternly materialistic but deeply reverent veracity,” in painting the life of Christ; but in Holman Hunt’s *Light of the World* we have such “spiritual passion” that *that* life became “the greatest of Realities, the only reality, so that

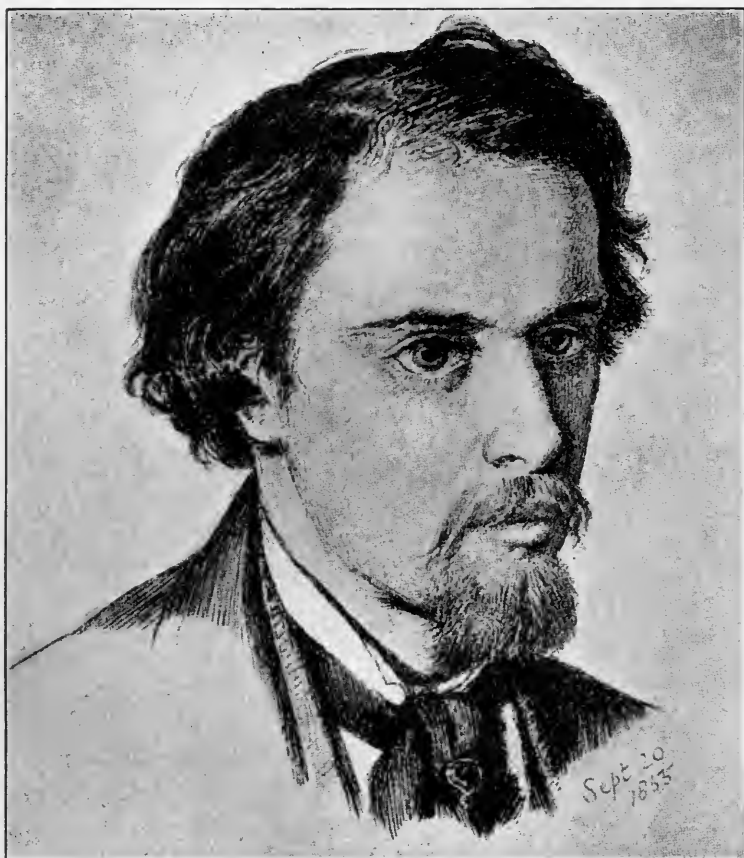
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there is nothing in the earth for him that does not speak of it." Ruskin finds in Hunt a new "respect for physical and material truth;" and while Rossetti's light was "sunshine diffused through coloured glass," Hunt, as a colourist, gives us "actual sunshine growing leafage, living rock, heavenly cloud." Referring to his picture of *The Strayed Sheep*, he says: "Claude's sunshine is colourless, only the golden haze of a quiet afternoon." But, when we see "the pure natural green, and tufted gold of the herbage in the hollow of the little sea-cliff"—where the sheep have strayed—"the pure sunshine on a bank of living grass," we are "soothed by it and raised into such peace as we are intended to find in the glory and stillness of summer, possessing all things." He thinks that picture was "the first that cast true sunshine on the grass."

Ruskin goes on to comment on Holman Hunt's conception of the *Flight into Egypt*, and to compare it with "former conceptions, in which the Holy Family were always represented as watched over and ministered to by attendant angels. But only the safety and peace of the Divine Child and its Mother, are thought of. No sadness, or wonder of meditation, returns to the desolate homes of Bethlehem. But in this English picture all the story of the escape as of the flight, is told in fulness of peace, and yet of compassion. The travel is in the dead of the night, the way

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unseen and unknown; but, partly stooping from the starlight, and partly floating with the desert mirage, move with the Holy Family the glorified souls of the Innocents. Clear in celestial light, and gathered into child-garlands of gladness, they look to the Child in whom they live; while water of the river of life flows before them on the sands." Ruskin thought that "none of the groups and processions of children in the loveliest sculpture of the Robbia's and Donatello's can more than rival the freedom and felicity of motion in the happy wreaths of these angel-children."



DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI



ECCE ANCILLA DOMINI



"BEATA BEATRIX"

From the painting in the Art Institute, Chicago



Photograph by F. Hollyer

"AUREA CATENA"





Photograph by F. Hollyer

LA DONNA DELLA FINESTRA



Photograph by F. Hollyer



PROSERPINA



CHRISTINA ROSSETTI AND HER MOTHER



Photograph by F. Hollyer GIRLHOOD OF THE VIRGIN MARY



FORD MADDOX BROWN



LECTURE FIFTH

GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS.



SINCE Ruskin died, no personality so rare as that of George Frederick Watts has left us.

In the following pages reminiscences of his conversation are inwoven with an estimate of the artist and the man.

In conversation he often enlarged on the teaching functions of Art, and on all the great artists — from Phidias to Michael Angelo, from Giotto to Raphael — as teachers of their time. He said he thought that Art had greater things to do in years to come than it had yet accomplished. He believed in the splendid possibilities before Humanity in this domain, as in all others open to it; but the pathways men must take to realise them were slow and patient labour day by day, integrity, hard work, self-sacrifice, fixity of aim, and joy in work. “He was not sure that we in England” (he referred, he said, to the average

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middle-class, and those just below them) "had the same love of beauty as the Italians of the same class had, or that we were amenable to it in the same way. He did not think that the English were a decadent race; but this great and wondrous nation of ours had lived through much, accomplishing much, and possibly it was near its meridian, if it had not already passed it. All nations had their rise, decline, and fall; and how many nations have vanished, in Egypt, Greece, Carthage, etc." The "increasing purpose" of the ages was referred to, but he replied, "Yes I believe in it; but that purpose is quite consistent with the loss of particular, and especially of insular, civilisations. The decay of nations was a sad but perhaps a necessary fact, connected with the rise of new elements, and types of greatness. In our time there was a want of the heroic (and yet we had many heroes, especially in humble life), the refined, the self-abnegating, and also of the 'high seriousness,' which Matthew Arnold longed for. There was too much scramble, and opinionativeness; and far too great a love of money, and of ease." He denounced the worship of athletics, the craze for sports, accompanied by betting. "Many young children are precocious in evil. It is sad to see them smoking cigarettes; and the want of decorous living is lamentable. Vulgarity is rampant, and there is a change, not always for the better, passing

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over the press of the country. It is a degradation to useful newspapers to admit vulgar advertisements into their columns. Old industries, alas! are vanishing, especially in the rural districts of England, and in the Highlands of Scotland.

Nevertheless the world is advancing. Evolution is a continuous process, and better things are in store for man than he has ever known. The passing away of old usages is inevitable; but I am glad to see that in Scotland your university students keep up their torchlight processions, when a new Lord Rector is installed. I wish they could wear coats of mail on these occasions! ”

He spoke of the vast influence of school teaching in forming the character of a nation. The teaching of Languages and of History was most beneficial; but he wished there was more Art-teaching in schools, from the humblest elementary one, up to Eton and the rest. He referred to the good work that was unconsciously done in other directions, in the course of Art teaching at school, by encouraging the children of peasant labourers to draw, paint, carve, mould, and design. Perhaps the best teaching of all was obtained by the daily sight in school, or on the walls of cottage homes, of authentic pictures of monumental men and women.

Referring to contemporary affairs he spoke

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with enthusiasm of Queen Victoria, but added that she should have gone to Ireland every year; for by so doing she would have won the hearts of the Irish people, as much as she had captivated the Scots. Also, she left the Prince of Wales too long out of touch with his coming sphere of influence. She might have delegated some work to him to do in connection with the State.

He enlarged on what we owe to the Irish race, and to our Irish inheritance. It had done much for the nation in literature and in war. While he liked the Scottish translations from the Gaelic, he liked the Irish ones better. This led him to speak of England's frequent injustices to Ireland, which had no doubt fostered democracy. If the democratic tide was flowing strongly, he did not wonder at it for, if we went back to the origin of property, we would find that many of the ancestors of our nobility came to their estates through conquest or seizure. The true condition of ownership was service.

Watts's appreciation of contemporary artists was great, often enthusiastic; especially of Burne-Jones, Rossetti, Millais, and Leighton, but also of others; and I mention those whom I have heard him praise especially—Holman Hunt, Fred. Walker, Legros, Lady Waterford, Mason, Pinwell, Whistler. Of a still living artist, whom I may not name, he said, "His portraits are as good as those of Vandyke or Velasquez.

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His directness and suggestion are quite as great as theirs." Most of his friends can recall words of eulogy spoken of his contemporaries, but amongst them all his appreciation of Burne-Jones was probably the keenest. I remember meeting him at an exhibition of his friend's pictures in the New Gallery, shortly after that friend's death, one day on my return from a Christmas visit to Rome. He asked me: "Where have you come from, and what have you seen?" When told, he said, with a majestic wave of his hand round the room in which we stood: "Well, in all Rome you saw nothing finer than this, nothing finer than *this*."

As a many-sided talker he had scarce a rival in our time. As a conversationalist his power was greater than Ruskin's, while his artistic insight was equal to that of his friend, and his criticism surer-footed. It had no fads, and was buttressed round about by a wider culture in other directions. The happy way in which he brought in his parallels and contrasts in conversation was very striking; e. g., speaking of Lord Kitchener's achievements as a commander, he said: "Could Wellington have done better than he did, or even so well?" Referring to the wife of one of our peers, herself of noble birth, and describing the way in which she entered a room, he exclaimed: "Pallas Athena wasn't in it."

Much could be said as to the authors, and the

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books, he loved best; Homer, the *Decameron*, Dante, Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott, etc.; above all, the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. He spoke to me with the greatest enthusiasm of Mr. Claude Montefiore's *Bible for Home Reading*.

As an artist Watts had a large and many-sided inheritance, and many types of excellence lived again in him. To a certain extent the spirit of Phidias, as well as that of Michael Angelo, was in him. So was that of Giotto, of Carpaccio, and John Bellini, of Da Vinci and Raphael, of Titian and Tintoretto. He was the successor of them all, the continuator of their work, their heir in the legacy of genius. Hence his amazing versatility. He so imbibed their spirit as to reproduce it in oil painting, in fresco, in sculpture, and as designer in metal. And yet he had no master in the ordinary sense of the term. "I followed no influence," he said, "even in youth." And if he called no man master, he did not found a school. As Wordsworth said of Milton:

His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart,

But the most distinctive feature of his genius was its idealism. To begin with, he dispensed with realistic models. He elaborated subjects, which he first saw with the "inward eye," before he wrought them out externally on canvas, doing this with an originality and directness that were all his own. He said, "I paint ideas, not ob-

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jects;" but by that he did not mean that he ignored the real. His pathway to reality was constructed, and carried out, along ideal lines. In an ever-memorable sentence he wrote: "My intention has not been so much to paint pictures that will charm the eye, as to suggest great thoughts that will appeal to the imagination and the heart, and kindle all that is best and noblest in humanity." And so great as was his mastery of technique, and his power in draughtmanship, it was far greater in symbolic representation, with what may be called a character-purpose underneath. The poet just quoted from wrote to Sir George Beaumont, "The poet is a teacher. I want to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing." Watts acted on this maxim as an artist; and his acting on it is one key to his greatness.

And so he did more than any other nineteenth-century teacher to refute the maxim that Art has nothing to do with Morality, or that the Beautiful and the Good are disparate; because he proved the opposite by his own practice. "Art for Art's sake alone" was to him an artistic heresy of the first magnitude. But the mere presence of a truth behind the form and colour of a picture was not enough. No one realised more fully, or proved better than he did, that the media through which artistic truth is presented, or conveyed, must be as perfect as technical processes can make them; but then he also saw,

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and taught, that they must express what they cannot delineate, and that they must suggest what they are unable to disclose.

And here came in his surpassing use of allegory, of clear and noble symbolism in pictures, where ideas are "half-concealed, yet half-revealed." Allegory was to Watts what his "dramatic-lyric" work in verse was to Browning, viz.: one of the media by which truth could best of all be discerned, although disclosed through veils. And in all of it, as wrought out by him, there was nothing strained or unreal; although much was elusive at first sight. We cannot imagine Watts attempting such a mosaic as Raphael's in the Chigi chapel, where the subject is "God Creating the Stars", a picture full of artifice, and in which the grotesquerie of the theme wholly overpowers the grace of the angel-boys. On the other hand, one can imagine the uninitiated realist looking at his *Fugue*, and being as perplexed to find its meaning, as readers of Browning's *One Way of Love* and *Another Way of Love* occasionally are to understand the latter. The obscurity of some of his pictures to the common eye, however, is due to the fact that the artist saw so much to which the common eye is blind. But most of his symbols are clear as crystal. His *Hope* is like Browning's *Abt Vogler*, or his *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, or his *Guardian Angel*. In *Love and Death*, where Love tries to stay the ap-

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proach of the last enemy; in *Love and Life*, in which the former guides and protects the latter; in *Time, Death and Judgment*, and in *Love Triumphant*, we have a single great thought presented to us, unobscured by complex side-suggestions—as was the case in that great contemporary picture *The Light of the World*. It is the combination of this clear direct allegory, this unambiguous ideal touching, with exceeding fineness of contour and warmth of colour, that has made his pictures appeal with such a charm alike to the educated and half-educated classes.

It is also worthy of note that the subjects chosen for his allegoric work were not sought in the distant past, or even in the present, but rather in the perennial and ever-present symbolism of the world. Realizing, as he always did, the impotence of language to disclose what lies deepest in man — although his power over the resources of the English tongue was great — he dealt with the “open secret” of the world through the medium of Art. In all his work he was artist first, teacher afterwards; artist pure and simple, while in insight he was seer and prophet. No one could be long in his presence without realizing that his knowledge of ultimate problems was as wide, and his acquaintance with them as deep, as that of any of his contemporaries. His familiarity with classical themes, with History and Antiquities,

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is seen in several of his works; but his appreciation of the great questions of the ages—their partial solutions and abiding mysteries—is disclosed in many others. It is for this reason, even more than for his versatility and many-sidedness, that some have presumed to think of him as the Shakespeare of British art. He was certainly far wider in his range than Sir Joshua, Gainsborough, or Haydon; while there was an elevation, a majesty, and magnificence about his work, which was absent from theirs.

His allegoric teaching culminated in those paintings which refer to Death and the Future. In those already mentioned, and in *Sic Transit Gloria Mundi*, *The Messenger*, *Death Crowning Innocence*, *Love Triumphant*, but above all in *The Court of Death*, the ever fascinating yet mysterious subject was dealt with from many different points of view. He wished to help men to realise that Death was not only inevitable and natural, but that it was a friend and not an enemy.

“I want,” he said, “to destroy the notion that it is ‘the king of terrors.’” Again, “my favourite thought recognises Death as a kind nurse who says, ‘Now then, children, you must go to bed, and wake up in the morning.’” In the *Sic Transit* — with its magnificent motto, “What I spent, I had; What I saved, I lost; What I gave, I have” — the truth is indirectly taught

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which culminates in *The Court of Death*. Of the former picture he said, "It conveys some of the lessons I would teach; at the end of life, a man has simply to leave behind the things he most prizes." But in the latter a much loftier note is struck. The central idea of that great painting is far nobler than what is conveyed in *Love and Death*: in which we see, and feel, the pathos of resisting love before resistless doom. He said to me, when expounding this later picture in Little Holland House, and at Limnerslease, "I want to take away the terribleness of Death, and the irrational shrinking of men and women before it." It is the same as that which underlies the whole of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. I ventured to refer to the well-known lines of another poet,

Thou takest not away, O death!

Thou strikest; absence perisheth.

He said, "Yes; but my aim is to represent Death as a gracious Mother, calling her children home. You see, I could not make the central figure in that picture a man. It is a woman, a Queen, a Goddess, a Mother. She summons her children, and they come to her gladly. The peer lays down his coronet, the warrior his sword; the maiden lies down to sleep.

The child, too, is there, for youth as well as age must die. Above them are two figures, one on either side. On the left hand there is Mystery, the impenetrable mystery of death; while on the

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right there is Hope, hope for the future. But the central idea, and the central fact, is the joyous, benignant Mother; a goddess, and more than a goddess, calling her children home."

It is questionable if any theological, argumentative, or poetical treatment of the subject of Death and the Future has taught the world more than this picture has done. Certainly no Platonic dialogue, or Stoical treatise, has excelled it. And it shows, more than his works do, that Watts was in a really profound sense, a religious artist; although not in the way in which the chief Italians of the Middle Age, from Cimabue to Raphael, were. He did not give us "Holy Families," "Annunciations," pictures of the "Nativity," the "Crucifixion," or the "Flight into Egypt," etc. He dealt rather with the fundamental verities, and even tried to penetrate the arcana of belief. And so, as already said, his message was to all the Churches. He was too wise a man to proclaim himself a teacher, too complete an artist to obtrude an ethical aim into his pictures. But throughout his whole career, dealing with the deep things of our humanity and the mysteries that underlie our common life, his aim was to hearten his contemporaries by unfolding those fair ideals and hopes with which his own mind was full. Even when historical or legendary subjects were selected by him, it was those which had a perennial lesson

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that were chosen, not those which reflected a passing *zeitgeist*, but subjects which were relevant to any and every age.

We must not forget that he almost brought about the reintroduction of fresco work into England. As all who have followed his career are aware, its turning point was his obtaining one of the first premiums of £300 offered for decorative designs in connection with the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament at Westminster. With a wise prescience, Benjamin Haydon had said, "If the Commission heroically adopts fresco, the effect on British Art will be tremendous. That province I know to be a silent volcano." It is unnecessary to re-tell the story of Watts's *Caractacus*, or his *Alfred Inciting the Saxons to Resist the Landing of the Danes*, or his later (and greater) fresco of *Justice* for the Hall of Lincoln's Inn; but his appreciation of mural painting on a large scale dealing with historic subjects was such that he made the most generous offers towards its realisation. Many know of his offer to the directors of the London and North-Western Railway to decorate the hall of Euston Station with groups illustrative of the progress of the race. Had the offer been accepted, and the work executed, it would probably have perished by this time; as fresco cannot live long uninjured by the fogs and darkness of our climate, and least of all in London. But the

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offer to adorn a railway station with pictures of the *Cosmos* can never be forgotten; and had it been realised, the result would probably have eclipsed the Lincoln's Inn achievement of 1859.

His dreams of a great hall to be filled with frescoes, illustrating not only English life, character, and history, but memorialising the noble deeds of all time—pictures which would be a school of teaching as well as a source of delight to thousands—was Utopian. Nevertheless it was a magnificent idea; and if its realisation ever comes, it must wait for the advent of another artist like himself.

Ruskin spoke of him as "the only real painter of History or Thought we have in England." That was doubtless an exaggeration, but there can be no doubt that he was one of the very greatest. Since his pictures are dispersed in places so far apart it would certainly be a great thing for the nation if as many of them as are removable—and there are between 700 and 800—could be brought together for a time in a great loan exhibition, similar to that of the works of Burne-Jones in the New Gallery some years ago, or the smaller collection of his own pictures in in the same gallery in 1896-7.

Watts was a distinguished portrait-painter for more than fifty years; and most of his contemporaries of eminence sat to him on his own invitation. It is doubtful if any portrait-painter the

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wide world over ever did this in the same way, and certainly no one has done it for a similar reason, viz., *that he might gift their likenesses to the nation*. His divining instinct told him who were the representative men whom it was desirable to include in his National Portrait Gallery, his *valhalla* of the illustrious. He did not succeed in obtaining sittings from all whom he wished to paint, but his list is a very remarkable one; and no portrait-painter was ever less photographic. Mere outward resemblance was not his aim, but the portrayal of character behind the features, a likeness hinted or suggested rather than wrought out. As expression is forever changing, many varying moods have to be combined in a unity made permanent through form and colour. More than that, the central dominant expression, the individuality of the individual, the speciality of his character, has to be discovered and represented. Tennyson's lines in the *Idylls of the King* were written in reference to the practice of Watts as portrait-artist:

As when a painter, poring on a face
Divinely through all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and colour of a mind and life
Live for his children ever at its best.

And how true this is of almost all his portraits. He is said to have liked best his rendering of the features of his brother artist, Burne-Jones; but

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others in his great gallery are quite as fine—Lords Stratford de Redcliffe, Lawrence, Lytton, and Tennyson, Mr. Russell Gurney, Mrs. Percy Wyndham, George Meredith, Joachim, etc. In a collected gallery of his works the variety of the types presented to us would be very noticeable. We would find the innocence of girlhood, the purity of womanhood, the strength of manhood, the patience of age, the contentedness of labour, the power of intellect, the expectancy of youth, the wisdom of maturity, the serenity of departing life. There is no doubt that had his early wish been realised, he would have been our fresco-painter on a national scale, *par excellence*; but then the world would have never seen his magnificent series of idylls, odes, and sonnets on canvas; great epics pushing all these aside.

As a colourist he had perhaps his equals amongst nineteenth-century men, but scarcely a rival. Millais and Burne-Jones surpassed him in some directions; but, take him for all in all, we must go back to the Venetians—and perhaps to Tintoretto rather than to Titian—to find canvases at once more gorgeous and more delicate; while for colour, subservient to an ethereal ideal aim, he had no rival in his time. He was very modest in his estimate of himself as a colourist; and would, perhaps, have admitted that he was conventional now and then, in the way in which he rendered the billowy fringes of his

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drapery, his flesh tints, or his clouds. A learner to the very end, he once said to me in the studio at Little Holland House, without the faintest *soupçon* of pretence—for affectation was impossible to him—"I think if I live, I shall be a colourist yet!" He had been lamenting his own failures, and praising the success of others when he said it. His landscape colour was occasionally as fine as that of Turner; while to equal its rich symbolism we must go back to Francois Millet. As in portraiture so in landscape-art—he was never a mere copyist; or, while reproducing Nature, he drew out its ideality, and combined details so as to present us with an allegory. Like our English Millais in his *Autumn Leaves*, his *Harbour of Refuge* and his *Vagrants*, or Frederick Walker in his *Plough*, or Mason in his *Harvest Moon*, he was a symbolist in his landscape-art. Such pictures as *The Dove that Returned in the Evening*, *The Dove that Returned not Again*, *Neptune's Horses*, *Good Luck to Your Fishing*, or *The Mid-day Rest*, are landscape-allegories. And when he dealt with Nature pure and simple, as in his sunset pictures of Western Scotland, his *Naples, the Bay and Vesuvius*, his *Carrara Mountains from Pisa*, or his *Mount Ararat*, the combination of strength and refinement, of meaning and delicacy, carries the spectator beyond the actual. Quite as much as our idealist poets do, he showed us

The light that never was on sea or land.

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His achievements in sculpture were such as to warrant the belief that had he given himself to it exclusively, after his early initiation through the Elgin marbles, he might have become perhaps the greatest in Europe since Michael Angelo. As a youth he learned much in the studio of William Behnes, but it was his study of the Elgin marbles that enabled him to produce his *Clytie*; and the Greek spirit of the Periclean age breathes through all his statuary, as it does through much of his mural painting and through such single figures as *Psyche*. *Hugh Lupus* is a magnificent statue, but his greatest work in sculpture is undoubtedly that which finds a temporary resting-place in the quadrangle of Burlington House, viz., *Physical Energy*, originally intended for the Thames Embankment, but to be shortly placed near the grave of Cecil Rhodes on the Matoppo Hills in South Africa. When seen on a height, and from a distance, its power will be apparent. The courtyard where it is at present is the worst possible place for such a colossal subject. Its designer and executor worked at it on and off for twenty years, as he worked at The Court of Death.

Of no sculptor or painter—not even of Michael Angelo and Raphael—can it be said that they never failed in their work; but there are, perhaps, fewer failures to be recorded in the long

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list of Watts's productions than in those of any other

In the artist-list enrolled.

He was a master in form, design, invention, colour, atmosphere, character, suggestion, ideality.

We find in him the classic and the renaissance spirit, the ancient and the modern combined; and yet he was pre-eminently our great nineteenth-century English artist.

When his life is written with authority—its story is already told in his pictures—we shall obtain reliable information as to many of the influences which shaped and determined his career. We shall know what Florence did for him, and Rome and Holland House, what Halicarnasus and Egypt did. Admired and honoured wherever he went, he lived an unobtrusive life; apart from others, though not a recluse. He never thought of “pleasing the public,” or “painting to order.” He followed the guidance of his own ideals, at first along a somewhat lonely road. More versatile and eclectic than any of his contemporaries, he allied himself to no school, owed allegiance to no masters, save the great Greek sculptors. This, however, did not prevent him from sympathising with men, and appreciating movements with which he could not identify himself, viz., the Pre-Raphélites. He could not be one of the leaders of that cult. His fresco-

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work in the *Hemicycle of Lawgivers* had been too Raphaelesque to permit of his being swept forward on a new current of romance, great as it was. But he appreciated (none more so) the aims, and honoured the successes, of Rossetti, Maddox Brown, Holman Hunt, Millais, and the rest of the brotherhood.

It is specially noteworthy that from the first he did not set himself to copy even the greatest of his predecessors. He studied them all, in London Florence and Rome, took mental notes of them, assimilated what was best in them, schooled himself by their excellences, followed their example, *but did not copy them*. He worked with rarest modesty and self-abnegation; and his greatness came out in his silence before the masterpieces which he revered, quite as much as in his ceaseless labour for posterity. The strenuousness of that labour, and his pursuit of the ideal, found expression in the motto carved on his sundial in the garden at Limnerslease,

The utmost for the highest.

The titles chosen by artists for their pictures are often significant, and some of those selected by Watts were poems in embryo. As many of Browning's poems were both theses and pictures in verse, so many of Watts's pictures were theses in form, and colour-illustrations of ideal truth on canvas. But the titles he gave them were often studies in symbolism, and they suggested more

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than they disclosed. I once asked him if he would give us a picture that might be called *The Strength of the Hills is His*. He replied: "I cannot use that title. It is too great for me. I have sometimes thought of *The Spirit of God Moved upon the Face of the Waters*. That I might use, but not the other." He added: "The first chapter of Genesis is full of titles for the painter of allegory. So are Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and some of the Psalms. But, of the greatest of all time, how true it is, 'never man spake like this man.' You read through all the literature of the East, of Greece, and of Rome, and where do you come across a sentence like this: "Suffer the little children to come unto me?" "

What he has written, or spoken, of his own convictions as to Art, and his own practice of it, has a special interest and value to posterity. In the year 1890, when he resolved not to claim his right as an R. A. to send pictures to Burlington House, but to let his work be judged each year by the Committee on its merits, he wrote, "In my seventy-fourth year, I cannot be certain of being up to my old level, and I have asked for severe judgment from the Committee of Selection, and the Hanging Committee, in order to be sure of not disgracing the Academy and myself; so I may have nothing there. Of course, it is probable that the Council may find my contributions

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sufficiently satisfactory to hang, but I am very sincere in my desire to have my work judged even severely. We have seen deplorable examples of the failure of the eye and hand, and I much desire not to be added to the number."

So late as 1895 he wrote: "I am always gratified when I find the *drift* of my efforts recognised. That may be accepted as a certain measure of success. Contemporary opinion as to the merit of technical accomplishment, I do not find much satisfaction in; knowing how much such opinion varies, as time goes on."

Very characteristic, too, was his habit of intermitting work on a particular picture in order to take up another, and again to lay the latter down. Doing his work by instalments, with intervals for fresh survey and reconsideration; this was to him the rest that fitted for toil. His relaxation was not idleness, but change of work.

His great kindness to animals, and his sympathy with the Associations for preventing cruelty to them, should not be forgotten. I remember his denunciation of what he called the "barbarous custom" of cutting, or docking, horses' tails. He said to me, "It destroys their beauty, and robs them of one of Nature's gifts. On artistic, as well as humanitarian grounds, it is to be condemned."

It was one of the aims of his life to preserve through his art the memory of brave deeds, done

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by brave men and women in humble life. He planned, and in fact carried out, the idea of erecting tablet-inscriptions to their memory in gardens and other public places; setting forth the heroism of acts that resulted in serious injury, or loss of life, in the effort to save the lives of others; and it is one of the most gratifying of tributes to him that this will, in all likelihood, be carried out more fully still. The inscriptions on the memorial wall of St. Botolph's, Aldersgate-street, are likely to be followed by the erection of a hall or park at Guildford for a similar purpose. Amongst the schemes which he cherished was the "Home Arts and Industries Association," which ranks with the "Kyrle Society," the "Society for the Preservation of Public Parks and Gardens," and the "National Trust for Places of Historical Interest and Natural Beauty," as one of the best means for bringing the influence of Art to bear on the daily life and surroundings of the poor. He firmly believed that many of the working-classes could learn the meaning of what was good and true, for themselves and others, if they entered into these realms by the gate called Beautiful.

He saw, as few have done, that high Art was an inheritance for the many, not the property of the esoteric few, but a privilege for all sorts and conditions of men, women, and children.

Similarly, that its mission was to all sects and

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parties. He dedicated one of his pictures, *The Spirit of Christianity*, "to all the churches;" and certainly the truth it teaches is one which may appeal to Christian, Jew, Mahometan, Buddhist, and Parsee alike.

Another of his suggestions was that frescoes or oil-pictures, representing great men or great events, or illustrations of great truths, should be painted on the walls of class-rooms in our chief public school during the long summer holidays, when there was time for the execution of the task. He believed that the sight, and the study of such paintings, would be an education to the boys and girls when they returned; and certainly, if mural tablets in halls or corridors of class-rooms, recording the names of prize-winners, or of old pupils, who afterwards distinguished themselves, or fell in battle for their country—are useful for their successors at school, such pictures as Watts desired to have painted and hung up might embody lessons quite as useful.

He retained a young man's heart in old age, while almost all his comrades had predeceased him. Ruskin's death grieved him much. He regretted that he had not managed to include him in his National Gallery of Portraits, and sent a laurel spray to Coniston churchyard—as he had sent a similar tribute to Westminster, at the funerals of Browning and Tennyson—remarking, "This is the last."

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At his funeral service in St. Paul's Cathedral, the archdeacon read as Scripture lesson the ever-memorable prayer from Ecclesiasticus, beginning, "Let us now praise famous men, and the fathers that begat us. Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore."

Although the immortality of all the "works of art and man's device" is relative, and only for a time, it is certain that the achievements of our great nineteenth-century painter will live and profoundly influence thousands, in the era on which we have entered, and in the others that are to follow it.

APPENDIX

In casting additional light on the art and ethical teaching of George Frederick Watts, the following extracts from a "Prefatory Note" to the catalogue of his works, on view in the winter exhibitions at the New Gallery in London (1896-7): along with others taken from the "Catalogue" itself—both of which were written by himself—are printed as an appendix:

FROM THE "PREFATORY NOTE."

THE great majority of these works must be regarded rather as hieroglyphs than anything else, certainly not as more than symbols, which all Art was in the beginning, and which everything is, that is not directly connected with physical conditions. In

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many cases the intention is frankly didactic, excuse for this—generally regarded as exasperating—being that it has been found, not seldom, that the attempts to reflect the thoughts of the most elevated minds of all ages, even in an unused and halting language, have not been without interest at least, if without profit.

Whatever type may have been used, classical, mediaeval, or other, the endeavour has been to impress distinctly the direction of modern thought; and in all, except two cases, reference to spiritual dogmas has been purposely avoided; the two exceptions being “Faith,” and the “Dedication to All the Churches.”

In the first, “Faith,” wearied and saddened by the result of persecution, washes her blood-stained feet, and recognising the influence of Love in the perfume and beauty of flowers, and of Peace and Joy in the song of birds, feels that the sword was not the best argument, and takes it off. “The Spirit of Christianity,” dedicated to all the Churches,” needs no explanation.

The long unfinished design “Chaos” was intended to be the introductory chapter of a general History of Mankind, the emergence from convulsion to evolution in material and social conditions, typified by emblems of the great human families.

In the several subjects relating to Death, the object has been to divest the inevitable of its ter-

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rors; the Power has always been depicted as impersonal, and rather as a friend than an enemy. In the large design, "The Court of Death," the power does not act, but receives homage; the soldier surrenders his sword, the noble his coronet, the mendicant and oppressed seek relief. Sickness lays her head upon the knee of Death, old age comes for repose, the child plays with the grave-cloths unknowingly, and in the arms of the silent figure is the youngest possible child, the very beginning of Life being in the lap of Death. Two powers, Silence and Mystery, guard the entrance of the Unknown.

"The Messenger" announces repose after life's work. The same Power takes charge of Innocence, placing it beyond the reach of evil. "Mammon" speaks for itself; so, also, "Great Possessions" and "Jonah," each being especially addressed to modern philosophy.

"Hope" strives to get all the music possible out of the last remaining string.

"Sic Transit" is an illustration of a noble mediæval inscription, having a general application; not symbolical of either individual Life or Death.

"Eve," in the majesty of unconsciousness, typifies what might be hoped for humanity, "for every human soul has, in the way of nature, beheld true being."

"Immeshed by Temptation" and "Repentant" may be easily understood.

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The figure with the Globe of the Systems may be called the Spirit that pervades the immeasurable expanse.

"Love and Death" represents the progress of the inevitable but not terrible; Death partially, but not completely, overshadows Love.

In "Love and Life" the slight female figure is an emblem of the fragile quality in humanity, at once its weakness and its strength; *sensibility* aided by love, sympathy, tenderness, self-sacrifice, and all that the whole range of the term implies; humanity ascends the rugged path from brutality to spirituality.

In the large monochrome, "Peace," the rightful sovereign of an intellectual world, with "Good Will," symbolised by an innocent child, wearied and foot-sore, regards through the dim atmosphere a distant glimmer, dawn or conflagration. In the design entitled "The Dweller in the Innermost," the vague figure may be as vaguely called Conscience.

This explanation is only intended to convey a bald and bare idea of the thread of thought connecting the whole together, and to show that the object in work has been to suggest, in the language of Art, Modern Thought in things ethical and spiritual.

FROM THE "CATALOGUE" ITSELF.

FAITH.

Faith, "wearied and saddened by the result

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of persecution," is seated on a rock with upturned face, and washes her blood-stained feet; on her lap lie flowers, the perfume and beauty of which inspire her with love; she is loosening the sword, believing she can persuade by other means. To be presented to the Nation.

LOVE AND DEATH.

Love stands upon the threshold of the House of Life, barring the entry against the fatal advance of Death. The bright wings of the God are already crushed and broken against the lintel of the door, and the petals are falling from the roses that Love has set around the porch. The pale form of Death presses forward with calm, resistless tread, and the white, uplifted arm passes above the head of Love in token of sovereignty. Painted in 1887. To be presented to the Nation.

THE ALL-PERVADING.

The all-pervading Spirit of the Universe represented as a winged figure, seated, holding in her lap the "Globe of the Systems."

SIC TRANSIT.

"What I spent, I had!
What I saved, I lost!
What I gave, I have!"

A symbol of the end of all human life, and of the varied possibilities it brings to each to make that life immortal. To be presented to the Nation.

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HOPE.

Hope, blindfolded, and clad in a pale blue robe, is seated on the globe, and holds in her hands her lyre, of which but one string remains; she lends her ear to the melody she still can make. To be presented to the Nation.

TIME, DEATH, AND JUDGMENT.

Time, represented as the type of unfailling youth and vigour, advances hand in hand with Death, while poised in the clouds above their heads follows the figure of Judgment, armed with the attributes of Eternal Law. To be presented to the Nation.

PEACE AND GOODWILL.

Full-length, life-size figure of a woman seated on the ground, a child on her lap, and leaning back against a low wall; her head is turned away, her face expressive of anxious yearning. To be presented to the Nation.

THE DWELLER IN THE INNERMOST.

Conscience, winged, dusk-faced and pensive, seated facing, within a glow of light; on her forehead she bears a shining star, and on her lap lie the arrows that pierce through all disguise, and the trumpet which proclaims truth to the world. To be presented to the Nation.

THE MESSENGER.

A man, worn with suffering, leans back in his chair; at his side lie the insignia of the various

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arts, now of no more avail; and near him stands the Messenger of Death, who, holding an infant on her left arm, touches him with her right hand and bids him come. To be presented to the Nation.

THE COURT OF DEATH.

Death, the sovereign power, holding in her lap an infant form that has been claimed before its life had well begun, a symbol that the beginning and end of life lie in the lap of Death, is seated enthroned upon the ruins of the world. On either side stand two angel figures, guarding the portals of the Unknown beyond the grave, and at her feet are gathered all sorts and conditions of men, who have come as faithful subjects to render their last homage to the Universal Queen. The warrior, still in the pride of strength and manhood, loyally surrenders his sword; the nobleman, with bowed head, lays down his coronet; and the poor cripple comes to crave of Death a final respite from pain. On the other side of the throne a young girl, wearied with suffering, rests her head, as though in sleep, upon the winding sheet, while a little child half, in sport, draws it over his head, and the Lion, as the type of physical power, crouches at Death's feet. To be presented to the Nation.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

The Spirit of Christianity is represented by an impersonal figure, clothed in red garments

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and enthroned in the clouds, who enfolds the children of all creeds and races within one mantle, and looking up to heaven, pleads on behalf of suffering humanity. Painted in 1875. To be presented to the Nation.

LOVE TRIUMPHANT.

Time and Death, having travelled together through the ages, are in the end overthrown. Love alone arises on immortal wing.

LOVE AND LIFE.

Love, with protecting half-outstretched wings, leading Life, represented as a trembling and fragile maiden, up the rocky mountain side, and helping her gently over the rugged ground. He looks down on her, his face full of tender care, whilst she, with upturned face, trusts herself entirely to his guidance. To be presented to the Nation.

CHAOS.

The intention of this picture is to convey in the language of symbol an idea of the passing of our planet from chaos to order. The condition of the several periods is more or less distinctly described by the movement of the presiding genius of each; and the modifications may be traced from the earliest periods, on the left of the picture, to where the reposeful giants on the right are suggestive of a state of stability and order. From the center of the picture, at first separately, denoting an interrupted record, the

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forms representing the cycles of time become linked in an unbroken chain, to indicate a perception of the permanent establishment of order.

To be presented to the Nation.





GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS, aged 17



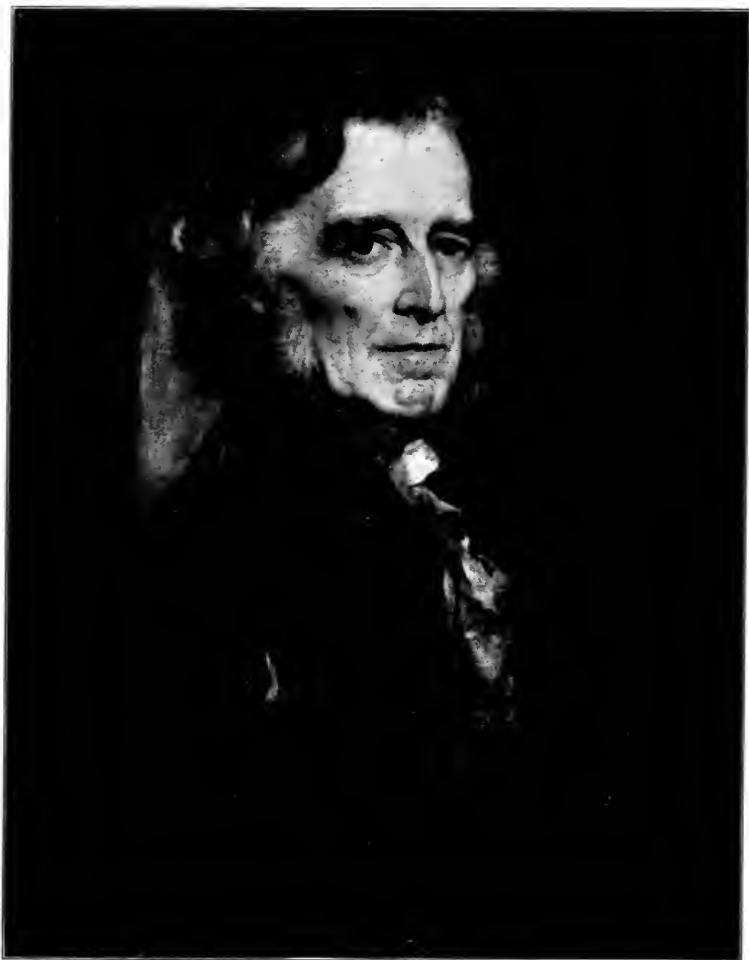
From the painting in the Art Institute, Chicago

DR. JOACHIM



Photograph by F. Hollyer

LORD TENNYSON



Photograph by F. Hollyer

RUSSELL GURNEY



Photograph by F. Hollyer

HOPE



Photograph by F. Hollyer



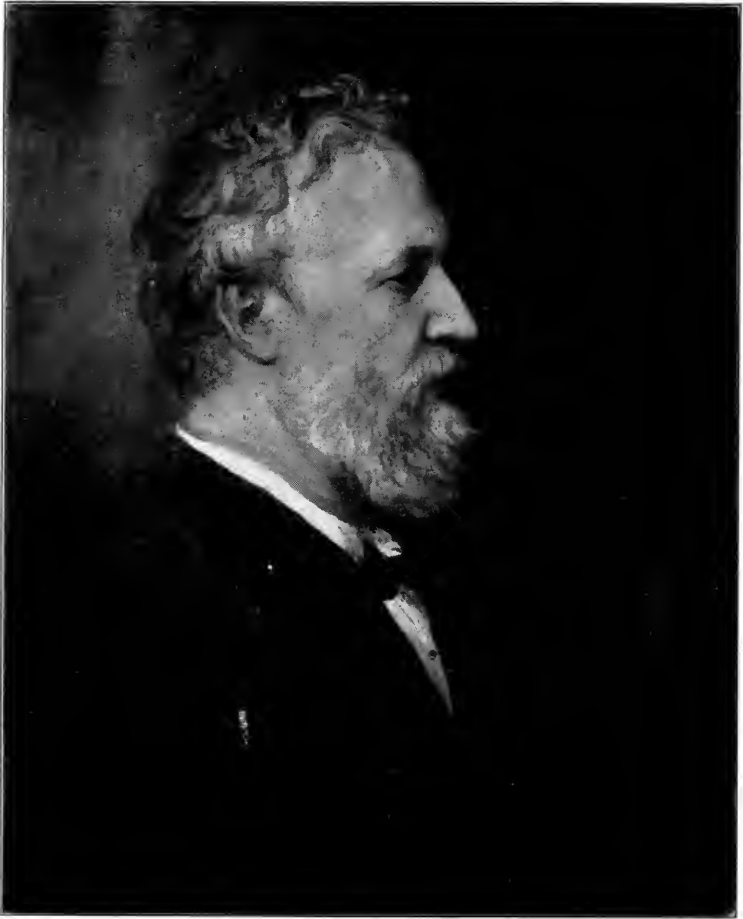
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THE COURT OF DEATH



Photograph by F. Hollyer

MATTHEW ARNOLD

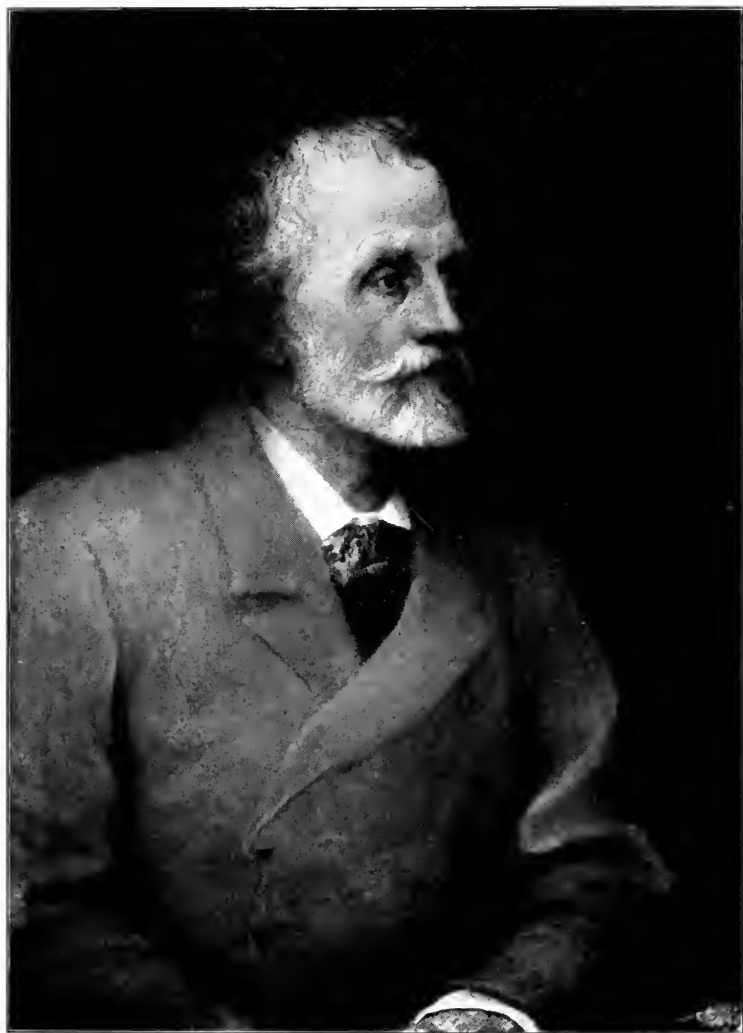


Photograph by F. Hollyer

ROBERT BROWNING



THE DWELLER IN THE INNERMOST
Photograph by F. Hollyer



Photograph by F. Hollyer

GEORGE MEREDITH



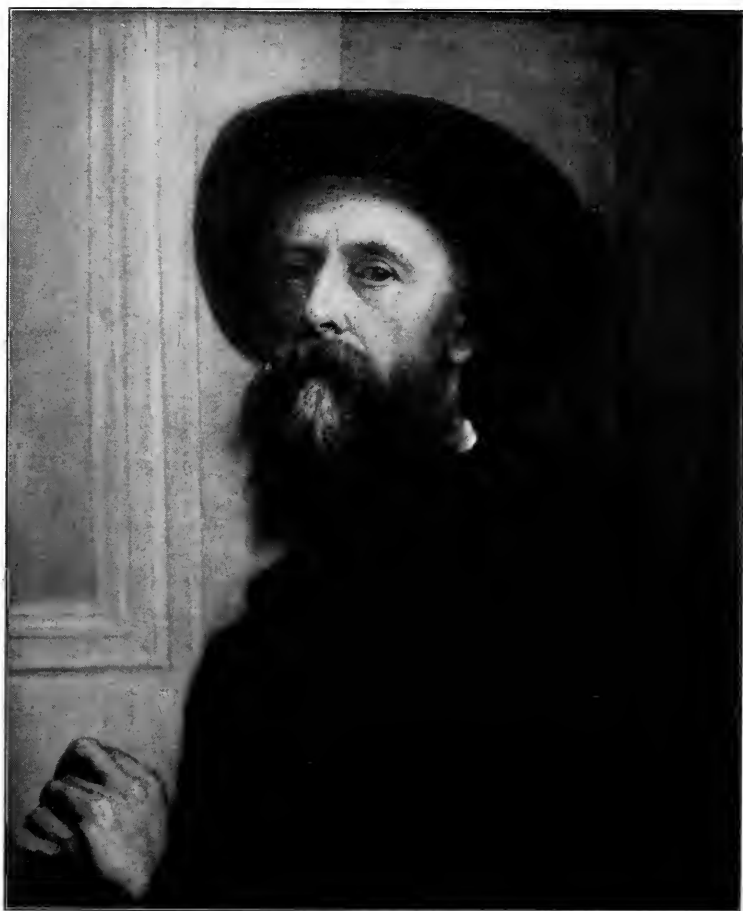
Photograph by F. Hollyer

LORD LYTTON



Photograph by F. Hollyer

WILLIAM MORRIS



[Portrait by himself]

GEORGE FREDERICK WATTS



Photograph by F. Hollyer GOOD LUCK TO YOUR FISHING



LECTURE SIXTH
EDWARD BURNE-JONES.



HE recently published *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones*, by his widow, if not an epoch-making biography, is certainly a monumental one. It is conspicuous in many ways, amongst the lives of nineteenth-century artists in England; and is unique as the work of a woman-writer, the wife of the remarkable man whom it memorialises. It is always difficult for a near relative to do justice to the life of a great man, saying neither too much nor too little; and if, in the memoirs of the late Bishop of London, and the author of *John Inglesant*, by their respective widows, we have exceptionally able biographies, it is no slight to them to place these volumes by Lady Burne-Jones on a still higher level of interest and of literary merit. They are full of brightness, illumination, pathos, abundant humour, and verisimilitude from first to last. There is no effeminacy in them, or gush of super-

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fluous praise, but a dispassionate record of fact, set forth in a brilliant and most charming manner.

Copious extracts from letters throw a flood of light upon the writer of them, and on many contemporary artists, poets, and literary men belonging to the latter half of the nineteenth century. Although an original artist's work is always his best memorial, Lady Burne-Jones is to be congratulated on raising so noble a literary monument to her husband.

Its primary interest to us, and to posterity, is the disclosure it gives of the character and art of one so singularly gifted and original as Burne-Jones was; but it is also extremely valuable for the light it casts on the men by whom he was surrounded, whom he attracted and influenced; on their genius, their insight, and their friendships. It was indeed a remarkable company of illustrious and unenvious men, each of whom rejoiced in the achievements of all the rest. It may be doubted if there ever was such a group in the previous annals of Art. There was certainly nothing like it in Greece and Rome, and through the long developments of Mediaevalism. Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Ford Maddox Brown, Holman Hunt, John Ruskin, George Frederick Watts, William Bell Scott, with many another kindred spirit, were a right noble brotherhood of workers

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for the beautiful; while outside the special artist-group were some distinguished men, with whom the reader of these *Memorials* becomes familiar. The *camaraderie* among these friends was great; and although their influence on the future was not equal to that which Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Lamb exerted at an earlier date—in the poetic springtime of the nineteenth century—it was perhaps more intense, one upon another, within the circle itself. The fact is that the art-production of Burne-Jones and his friends was poetic work; and the movement which they inaugurated, and helped forward, was similar in character to that literary renaissance for which the *Lyrical Ballads* prepared the way. Both of them were stupendous and inevitable reactions from past convention and commonplace.

The story of Burne-Jones' life has now been told with minute and loving care. His childhood and youth at Birmingham, his early reverence, his loneliness, his Celtic inheritance, his sense of the mystery of the world, his vivid appreciation of romance, his precocious and abounding humour, are all recorded. Æsop's *Fables* was the first book he loved, his "treasure-house." He rose rapidly at King Edward's Grammar School till he was head of the English department, and got to love his books as Elizabeth Barrett Browning did, Ossian and Burger being early friends; while his love of fun and boy-

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ish pranks was early developed. At the age of fifteen a quaint religiousness comes out in his letters to his cousin, written from the "urbs fumi." He went to Hereford, where the influence of the Cathedral and its services told upon him, and led him to think of taking clerical orders. Another visit to London, however, opened his mind simultaneously to the wonders of ancient Art in the British Museum. The books which most influenced him were those of Scott, Dickens, Humboldt, and Newman. In his twentieth year he entered Exeter College, Oxford; and, although he did not work in the beaten tracks of scholarship so much as in the collateral paths of literature, he imbibed some of the best things in the Greek and Roman classics, without being captivated by them. Oxford did much for him indirectly; but so far as fellowship went, he was at first almost an alien, except for the one man who became his closest life-long friend, William Morris.

As he read with Morris, his first ambition was to take part in forming a new community, which would be devoted to "the organised production of religious art." Simultaneously his sense of humour increased, and he wrote delightful letters personifying other people. The one he sent to his friend Price—in the character of "Edward Cardinal de Birmingham"—has not been excelled in juvenile composition. But in the

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midst of Oxford scholarship he was disturbed, almost as keenly as Wordsworth was amongst the Cambridge wranglers, by

A strangeness in the mind,
A feeling that he was not for that hour,
Nor for that place.

It was not the subject-matter of what was taught that made him desolate, but the way in which it was imparted. The city itself—with its wondrous mediævalism—attracted him, and he had a strong natural bent towards Logic and Metaphysics; but his cravings were not satisfied. And in these undergraduate days he came increasingly under the influence of one who was almost a contemporary, and supremely original amongst the teachers of the hour, John Ruskin. In a letter to Mr. Price he said: "In æsthetics he (Ruskin) is an authority. Above all things I recommend you to read him. He will do you more good in twenty chapters than all the mathematics ever written." (Vol. I., p. 79.) Again, in August, 1853: "Ruskin has published the second volume of his *Stones of Venice*, entitled 'Sea Stories.' His style is more wonderful than ever; the most persuasive oratory I ever read. His acme is to come. There never was such a mind and soul so fused through language yet. It has the brilliance of Jeffrey, the eloquence of Macaulay, the diction of Shakespeare (had he written in prose), and the fire of Ruskin; we

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can find no other." (Vol. I., p. 85.)

At length, in his twenty-second year, the fountains of the great deep were broken up for him, and he writes from Oxford: "I have just come in from my terminal pilgrimage to Godstow ruins, and the burial-place of fair Rosamond. The day has gone down magnificently; all by the river's bank I came back in a delirium of joy, the land was so enchanted with bright colours, blue and purple in the sky, shot over with a dust of golden shower, and in the water a mirrored counterpart, ruffled by a light west wind—and in my mind pictures of the old days, the abbeyes and long processions of the faithful banners of the cross, copes and crosiers, gay knights and ladies by the river bank, hawking-parties, and all the pageantry of the golden age—it made me feel so wild and mad, I had to throw stones into the water to break the dream! I never remember having had such an unutterable ecstasy; it was quite painful with intensity, as if my forehead would burst. I get frightened of indulging now in dreams, so vivid that they seem recollections rather than imaginations, but they seldom last more than half an hour; and the sound of earthly bells in the distance, and presently the wreathing of steam upon the trees where the railway runs, calls me back to the years I cannot convince myself of living in." (Vol. I., pp. 97-8.)

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Here were

Those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things
Falling, from us, vanishings,
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,

as truly as in Wordsworth's case.

In a letter of the same year, written to his friend MacLaren, he gives an account of a visit to the Royal Academy, in which we see the signs of new insight into Art. He criticises Landseer, Maclise, and others, for the kind of subjects to which they confined themselves: "What with silly, unmeaning subjects, and those of more questionable character devoted to the hero-worship of traitors and robbers, or the prettiness and romance of a heartless religion, I saw that the Pre-Raphaelites had indeed come at a time when there was need of them." (P. 101.) And during the same time in London he thus describes a visit to the Crystal Palace: "I had only time to visit Sydenham once. As I looked at it in its gigantic wearisomeness, in its length of cheerless monotony, iron and glass, glass and iron, I grew more and more convinced of the powerlessness of such material to effect an Architecture. Its only claim to our admiration consists in its size, not in those elements in which lies the true principle of appreciation, form and colour; its form is necessarily rigid and mechanical, its colour simple trans-

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parency and a painfully dazzling reflection; it is a fit apartment for fragrant shrubs, trickling fountains, muslin-de-laines, eau-de-Cologne, Grecian statues, strawberry ices and brass bands—but give me ‘The Light of the World,’ and the apse of Westminster.” (Vol. I., p. 101.) N. B. that this is the language of a youth of twenty-two, in the year 1855.

His discovery that the clerical life was not one that either he or Morris should enter was made gradually, and with no revulsion from his old ideal even of a religious brotherhood, such as “the monastery” he once dreamt of; but he found that a magnet which they did not create, but only felt, drew them in a different direction. I think, however, that the unhappy expulsion of Frederick Denison Maurice from King’s College, and the traditionalism of many in the English Church, weakened the hold which the latter once had upon him; while a more inward religion was developing in him apace—a religion, not with Art attendant as a handmaiden, but interpenetrated with it over its entire area, and entered by “the gate called Beautiful.” His character, too, was now growing in nobility, not passing through a period of *Sturm und Drang*, but evolving features of rare dignity, self-effacement, reserve, and consideration for others. No reader of these volumes can fail to note such characteristics of the man. How few have felt, as he did

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in his twenty-second year at Oxford: "I hold it a point of honour with every gentleman to conceal himself, and to ease life for everyone."

He thought of a military life, but was rejected as unfit for the army on the score of health. He went instead to London, and soon got to know the charm of the art-brotherhood of the Pre-Raphaelites. But a still richer experience awaited him.

In July, 1855, he made his first visit to the Continent with Morris. They went from Boulogne, by Abbeville to Amiens and Beauvais. Of the Cathedral of Beauvais he wrote, so late as the year 1892: "Do you know Beauvais, which is the most beautiful church in the world? It is thirty-seven years since I saw it, and I remember it all—and the processions—and the trombones—and the ancient singing, more beautiful than anything I had ever heard, and I think I have never heard the like since; and the great organ that made the air tremble—and the greater organ that pealed out suddenly, and I thought the day of judgment had come—and the roof, and the long lights that are the most graceful things man has ever made. What a day it was, and how alive I was, and young; and a blue dragonfly stood still in the air so long that I could have painted him. . . . If I took account of my life, and the days in it that most went to make me, Sunday at Beauvais would be the

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first day of my creation.” (Vol. I., p. 113.) In 1897 he wrote of “the holy beauty of vast Beauvais church.”

They went on in that year (1855) to Paris, to see the Louvre; returning by Chartres, and Rouen, to Havre; and it was “while walking on the quay at Havre at night that we (Morris and himself) resolved definitely that we would begin a life of Art, that he (Morris) should be an architect, and I should be a painter. That was the most memorable night of my life.” On his return to England he went to Oxford and Birmingham, Poetry as well as Art engrossing him. He read the poets and novelists, for their own sakes, but also that they might inspire him with subjects for his art. His first work in his chosen field was a series of designs made for Mr. MacLaren’s *Fairy Family*; and he became one of a brotherhood of seven, who wrote for the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*.

He returned to Oxford to find it devoid of life. Its greatness was that of the past. When he came to see—as Morris did—that to take orders was not his vocation, and that for both of them Art and Literature were their calling, he went up to London; longing to meet the author of *The Blessed Damosel*, the man who had drawn the Maids of Elfenmere. He wrote to Ruskin, and received a reply which led him to say: “I am not E. B. J. any longer. I’m the man who

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wrote to Ruskin, and got an answer by return!" The influence of all the men of the renaissance, of Carlyle and Kingsley and Ruskin, of Malory's *Morte d' Arthur*, the study of the poets Chaucer Tennyson and Browning, changed his ideal. More especially the sudden hero-worship of Dante Rossetti as art-worker and colourist, the first sight of him at the Working Men's College in Great Ormond Street, and their subsequent meeting and interview, decided his career for Burne-Jones. He was allowed to visit Rossetti's studio, and "to see him at work some thirty times." It was a momentous time in the evolution of the character of each; and we cannot exaggerate the rare wisdom of Rossetti in letting the genius of his friend develop in its own way, without his interference. His quick perception of what that genius might produce showed him that to prescribe the lines on which it should work would be detrimental.

Every young artist runs the risk of being deflected from the pathway prescribed to him by nature, through excessive hero-worship, and of thus becoming a copyist instead of an originator. But when Burne-Jones subsequently imbibed the spirit and influence of some of his contemporaries—notably that of Watts—he improved both in his drawing and his colour.

His own account of the first days with Rossetti is one of the most memorable things he wrote.

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"How we worshipped him! He was an inspirer of others, a finder of hidden things, a revealer of light and discoverer of beauty, who fired hundreds with the same enthusiasm, and kindled the divine spark in every breast. He it was who first taught me not to be afraid of my own ideas, but always be myself, and do the thing I thought best. And then how boundless was his generosity, how royal the praise with which he blessed our feeble efforts, how untiring the pains he took to help us . . . of which a beautiful and golden record is somewhere written. What a world it was! and he the centre and light of it all!"

At an earlier date he had written to a friend: "Don't be afraid of being independent in thought. It is a prerogative of man. This is the time for us to think highly of our species, to dream of development and the divinity of mind; we shall soon wash away fancies in getting our beard. It is a glorious thought that in our nature's ruin we yet possess our identity, and stand isolated as beings with mind. It is grand to be in such peril as we are, to be born with free will," etc. (Vol. I., p. 89.)

He also said that what Rossetti taught him was "to design perpetually, to seek no popularity." And again: "I never knew anything that could encourage the superstition that some people have that the gods are jealous of the pos-

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sible achievements of great men, as in Rossetti's case. Everything was ready for the making of a glorious creature—the perfect hunger for Romance that was spread abroad in the world at the time when he came into it, the mingling of blood in him, his own admiration and discrimination for all that was splendid, his surroundings, and the things he was brought up among, the people of all sorts of cultivation that he must have known from his earliest days—never was anyone so started, so ready for a great career.” (Vol. I., pp. 149–50.)

A long article might be written on Burne-Jones' appreciation of his brother artists and contemporary poets—as this, of a veteran comrade, still happily among us, written in 1856: “A glorious day it has been, one to be remembered by the side of the most notable in my life, for whilst I was painting, and Morris making drawings in Rossetti's studio, there entered the greatest genius that is on earth alive, William Holman Hunt—such a grand-looking fellow, such a splendour of a man, with a great wiry golden beard, and faithful violet eyes—oh, such a man! And Rossetti sat by him. * * * and all evening through Rossetti talked most gloriously, such talk as I do not believe any man could talk beside him.” (Vol. I., p. 139.)

In March, 1857, he wrote thus of Browning to Miss Salt:

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"You won't at first like him much, perhaps. He is too different from anyone else to be liked at first sight by most, but he is the deepest and intensest of all poets, writes lower down in the dark heart of things, rises up to the clear surface less often. Oh, how ten lines of him help one! *Paraceslus*, and the *Soul's Tragedy*, and *King Victor*, and the *Unknown Painter*, and the fifty *Men and Women* that follow, all sung out as if Browning sat continually at the roots of human life, and saw all things." (Vol. I., p. 153.)

In the same letter, after mentioning Ruskin, he says: "One seems to want no guide now, but to flow down with the course of great spirits new and old, and understand them without an interpreter."

This is on Tennyson, written after his funeral in the Abbey:

"There should have been street music, some soldiers and some trumpets, and bells muffled all over London, and rumbling drums. But, as he sleeps by Chaucer, I daresay they woke up and had talks in the night, and I have spent much of the early dark mornings making up talks for them. I suppose he'll be hurrying off to Virgil soon."

And as a final sample of the charm of his correspondence, take this, written in his twenty-fourth year to a girl who became his sister-in-law: "I want to teach you so much History

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that your sympathy may grow continually wider, and you may be able to feel and realise past generations of men just as you do the present, sorrowing for them when they failed, and triumphing with them when they prevailed; for I find this one conviction never changing but always increasing, that one cannot live a life manfully or truthfully without a very wide world of sympathy, and love, to exercise it in. So long as I had no heroes, but all times and generations of the past and present years were as one dead level of interest or indifference, I then knew nothing truly or enjoyed deeply, nor loved strongly; but now that I have set aside my heroes for peculiar reverence—all such as have been highly blessed with imagination, and have laboured nobly and fought valiantly, hundreds of them up and down great centuries—since then I have seen things more truly than ever before.” (Vol. I., pp. 143-4.)

To trace the sure though gradual rise of Burne-Jones as a painter is perhaps less necessary than to trace the expansion of his friendships and his influence. But the recognition of his genius, his success after reiterated discouragement, was the reward of patient toil and unflinching loyalty to his ideals. And to the historian of British art in the nineteenth century the chief thing to be noted is the way in which he has educated two generations of his fellow-countrymen. He

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worked joyously when he was very poor, feeling that outward poverty was no evil and no disgrace, when the riches were within. He scarcely ever felt it an impediment to work, while he scorned everything that was sordid, and despised a merely ephemeral and spectacular success. Nor must we forget in this connection his noble ethical teaching; both in his familiar letters, his conversation, and through the symbolism of his art.

No one who has once come under the spell of his genius can afterwards care for the trivial or sentimental, scarcely even for the commonplace. His painting was never didactic, any more than his letters were; but he taught by opening up a new world of ideality, with far-reaching vistas of suggestion on every side. Then he was so simple at times, so quaintly humorous; the "airy fairy" grace of his fancy blending with the royal power of his imagination, and both together leading him to a truly imperial constructiveness, in which he stood alone. He was never satisfied with what he had achieved; and probably none of our modern artists ever worked so easily with so many different kinds of material; oil, water-colour, glass, tapestry, fresco-work, crayon, pen and ink. His perpetual aspiration was also seen in his habit of having many pictures in his studio, at different stages of progress towards completion; like some authors who have habitu-

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ally several books in hand, at which they take turns, setting one aside and taking up another for a rest. In all his work he saw the possibility of new development, fresh attainment in store. Dissatisfaction accompanied all his successes, but this contained a prophecy of future realisation. We see it in his *Love Among the Ruins*. It comes out in *the Godhead Fires*, in the Pygmalion series, and in *Love Leading the Pilgrim*.

And so, if there is a good deal of sadness, there is also a preponderance of joy in his work. Much is disclosed, but more is kept back in a sublime reserve, and only hinted at, as was the case in all the noblest art of Watts. Nothing is obtruded; there is no pronouncement or parade. The simple ideality of some of his single figures, such as *Vespertina Quies*, or *Aurora*, or *The Wood-Nymph*, is unrivalled; and no modern British artists, except Watts and Rossetti, were so far removed from the photographic world of the actual. None ever worked more sedulously toward the ideal; and so, even when landscape is brought in for a background—as in *Green Summer*, or *Venus's Mirror*—we have not a reproduction of the actual, but its idealisation. Therefore it is that, with all the weird elements of his genius eliminated, we find that Burne-Jones invested everything he touched with an occult radiance, a joyous poetry, a far-off mysterious significance, helping us to see the

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highest types of Beauty through the veil of wondrous allegory.

It is easy to criticise the sameness of type in his woman's faces, but the same may be said of almost every great artist; and Burne-Jones' typical woman-face is superlatively lovely. Unlike the common monotonous reality that we usually see, it is at once a glorification of the actual, and a revelation of what transcends it. There was a delightful saying of his, which many of his contemporaries would endorse—and which applies to much beyond the sphere of plastic art—"When is a picture finished? Never, I think; and it is a symbol of life itself in that way; so when I say it is finished I mean it is cut off, and must go away." He used to add that it was only the van coming to take it away that finished a picture for him.

There is no need to enlarge on his work in starting the Art Company, along with Morris and his friends, and the fortunes of the company, which has done so much for the refinement of decorative art in Britain. But his constant and strenuous love of work, his finding his best recreation within his own studio, is noteworthy. He agreed with the poet who wrote:

Work, work, work.

'Tis better than what you work to get.

And he once said: "I thank the Lord in heaven
He gave me a savage passion for work." His

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knowledge and love of flowers was another memorable thing; but it is on the man and his work that emphasis must be mainly laid. A discriminative writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* once called attention to his affinity in some things with Wordsworth. "They have much in common. The repose of mind, the sincerity and sobriety of temper, the sense of the infinite in simple things; all these and other points they touch." This is true, but it is of what is distinctive in him that we are in search; and one thing comes out in an early letter, which he wrote in his twenty-fifth year, to that kind Miss Sampson who had looked after him from infancy: "Don't let any person persuade you that you have been a fool for not looking after your own interests. God doesn't call such people fools. It's right to do it, but it's not wrong not to do it. I have worked very hard at Art for two years, and find it difficult to live; but there are so many things to be grateful for, that it is not right to name anything as unfortunate." (Vol. I., p. 185.)

Mention must be made of the wonderful effect of foreign travel upon him, especially of his visits to Italy, of the way in which he instinctively assimilated the best things in mediæval art, and at once felt at home amongst its treasures. As Browning wrote,

Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it Italy.

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as Matthew Arnold felt, "Every year in which I do not visit Italy is a year lost;" so Burne-Jones said, "I walk about in London, but all the while I live in Italy." It was by his reproduction of the spirit of the great Florentines and Umbrians that he taught his generation, as others wrote of them; and he thus initiated thousands into the secrets of Botticelli, Luini, Carpaccio, Bellini, as much as Ruskin did by his lectures and writings. Not that he failed in description, for he had a wonderfully retentive memory, and the way in which he unfolded the excellence of pictures at Florence to Miss Graham, and those at Venice to Miss Gladstone, was marvellously vivid. Mention of Ruskin recalls their temporary misunderstanding. There was, however, no real breach at any time with his old friend and teacher, only a slight difference in sundry ideals, because the art-impulse in him was working for a time on other lines. He felt that, to unfold character, he must devote himself to the delineation of the human form, and therefore to the study of draperies. Ruskin wrote: "Nothing puzzles me more than the delight that painters have in drawing mere folds of drapery, and their carelessness about the folds of water and clouds, or hills and branches. Why should the tuckings in and out of muslin be eternally interesting?" (Vol. II., p. 68.) Burne-Jones wrote: "He [Ruskin] quarrels with

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my pictures, and I with his writing; and there is no peace between us." But, so soon as they again met, he said: "I forgave him all his blasphemy against my gods, he looked so good through and through." And this is how Ruskin wrote to him, after a return from Switzerland in 1863: "I want you to do me a set of simple line illustrations of mythology and figurative creatures, to be engraved and to make a lovely book of my four political economy papers in *Fraser*, with a bit I'm just adding. I want to print it beautifully, and I want a Ceres for it, and a Proserpine, and a Pluto, and a Circe, and a Helen, and a Tisiphone, and an *'Ανάγκη*, and a Prudentia, and a Sapientia, and a Temperantia, and a Fortitudo, and a Justitia, and a Caritas, and a Fides, and a Charybdis, and a Scylla, and a Leucothea, and a Portia, and a Miranda, and an *'Απερὴ*, and an Ophelia, and a Lady Poverty, and ever so many people more; and I'll have them all engraved so beautifully—and then I'll cut up my text into little bits, and put it all about them, so that people must swallow all at once, and it will do them so much good. Please think of it directly." (Vol. I., pp. 271-2.) Now, although this, if taken as prescribed, might have given to most people a very bad fit of artistic indigestion, it is noteworthy as showing to whom Ruskin turned as a fellow-worker in the domain of the beautiful. Not

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less interesting is the correspondence with Ruskin about Whitelands College, its May Queen, and its hawthorn cross.

Much has been said of Burne-Jones' inability to work along with brother-artists, and it was true of some of them, although much exaggerated. What he most prized removed him from the sphere in which many others worked. He broke with the Old Water Colour Society, and with the Royal Academy, in the most courteous way; and when he thought the management of the Grosvenor Gallery had declined, he did not scruple to say so, and to act on his conviction. But it was all due to his sense of "the high calling" of "creative art." The same ideal which led him to denounce the modern "restorer"—whether of buildings or of pictures—the tampering with the glory of St. Mark's at Venice, and the architectural misconstruction of many modern picture-galleries, induced him to discourage "loan museums" of Art in provincial cities, which often led to the injury or loss of priceless things; and to encourage instead the local establishment of "lasting collections of works of Art," in which the people could see "the best copies procurable of the recognised masterpieces of the world still left to us." Returning to the architectural faults of picture-galleries, he insisted that pictures should be so hung as to admit the light most favourable to them, and that each

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picture should, if possible, be separated from others by some inches of space. But this was quite as much in the interest of the spectator as of the artist. He felt strongly that some of the architects of our galleries were to blame for the results. In the National Portrait Gallery, for example, how impossible it was to see Watts' portraits to advantage. "They seem all lumps of paint and ribs of canvas. There is no chance of a ray of sentiment penetrating them." (Vol. II., p. 79.)

The details of life and work at the Grange are lovingly told in these *Memorials*; his joy in his work, and in the many friendships which advancing years brought him, and confirmed. Visits from George Eliot, Charles Norton, Madame Wagner, and many others, are delightfully recorded; and their appreciations cast light on every side. It is thus that Mrs. Lewis wrote of him: "I want to tell you that your work makes life larger and more beautiful to me. I mean that historical life of all the world, in which our little personal share often seems a mere standing-ground from which we can look all around, and chiefly backward. Perhaps the work has a strain of special sadness in it—perhaps a deeper sense of the tremendous outer forces which urge us, than of the inner impulses towards heroic struggle and achievement; but the sadness is so inwrought with pure elevating sensibility to all

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that is sweet and beautiful in the story of man, and in the face of the earth, that it can no more be found fault with than the sadness of midday, when Pan is touchy, like the rest of us."

The wealth of curious *dicta* on many of the great questions of the ages which occur in these volumes, scattered amid its biographical details, gives us some rare glimpses into the character of those who uttered them, and turns what might have been a mere miscellany of dry facts into a *hortus inclusus* of wisdom. While "Morris never faileth, and Ruskin always flourisheth," there are scores of others, less known but quite as interesting, to whom the reader is introduced in the most natural and delightful manner.

Much light, moreover, is cast on the origin, progress, and completion of that 'great series of allegoric pictures in which Burne-Jones' art is enshrined, and a separate descriptive article might be devoted to each of them. There was so much of a sane realism from which the mystic idealism sprang, and which it outsoared. The man who wrote: "I was born at Birmingham, but Assisi is my true birthplace," had by that time attained to his artistic majority; and he realised, as truly as Wordsworth did, that his vocation was to be "a teacher, or nothing;" not a doctrinaire expounder, but a symbolic interpreter of truth. We may go back to one of the earlier pictures which marks his discovery of the

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path in which his work was to be carried on, remembering that he wrote thus to a friend: "I mean by a picture a beautiful romantic dream of something that never was, never will be, in a light that never shone, in a land no one can define or remember, only desire; the form divinely beautiful." It is his picture of *The Merciful Knight*, painted after he came under the early delicious influence of Tuscany; and in no work of his later years has he more nobly extracted the truth which lies at the heart of a legend. An admirable critic (Fortunec de Lisle) has written thus of it:

"It is taken from the Florentine legend of San Giovanni Gualberto, who, riding forth on a certain Good Friday to accomplish his vow of vengeance on the murderer of his brother, came upon him alone and unarmed in the desolate road which leads to San Miniato, and stayed his uplifted sword, and forgave the assassin, when, extending his arms in the form of a cross, he begged for mercy in the name of Him who, dying on that day, forgave his murderers."

"The legend says that, letting his enemy depart, Gualberto entered a wayside shrine, and knelt before the crucifix, and that the figure of Christ bent down and embraced him, "in token that his act had pleased God." From that moment all earthly passions and desires fell from him; he forsook the world, and entered the mon-

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astery of San Miniato, and later became the founder of the Order of Vallombrosa. * * * No picture of a miracle that has ever been painted carries with it a more intense and awe-inspiring sense of the reality of a supernatural event than this one; and the *tour de force* the painter has accomplished is this, that the impression left on the mind of the beholder who has gazed entranced on its mystic beauty is not of the strangeness and impossibility of the event, nor of mere admiration for the skill with which it is depicted; it is an all-pervading sense of the mystical element which so impregnates the atmosphere of the picture as to compel acceptance of the facts presented, in the simple unquestioning spirit of the Middle Ages. The mind is exalted into a region of spiritual mysteries where all things are felt to be possible, and an overpowering conviction is borne in upon one, that in such a place, at such a time, and under such circumstances, at the great crisis of his soul's history—whether the statue in very fact turned itself towards him becomes immaterial—Gualberto *felt* that embrace, which changed the current of his life.”

It is interesting to compare *The Merciful Knight* with the finished story of *Pygmalion and the Image*, which was first exhibited in 1879, especially with the third of the four pictures which he called *The Godhead Fires*, of

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which the same critic writes:

"It shows the completion of human work by divine power. Pygmalion has gone to the temple to pray; and, human passion having withdrawn itself, the divine presence enters; and the goddess of Love, herself borne on a cloud, doves fluttering beneath her feet, heaven's sphere-like radiance about her head, with uplifted right hand sends a thrill of life quivering through the marble limbs. Half woman, half statue, yet with bewildered soul gazing from the awakening eyes, Galatea bends forward with swaying motion, and her outstretched hands find support on the raised arm of the divinity." (Pp. 118-19.)

It is easy to indicate in what Burne-Jones fell short of the very highest attainment. No one knew it better than he did. But he had no rival as an idealist in art, in that glorious realm of poetic insight where imagination and fancy combine with reason and the most delicate perception of the senses, except his great contemporary, Watts; and as I mentioned Watts' oral tribute to his friend's greatness, I may add Rossetti's verdict written to another than myself. "If, as I hold, the noblest picture is a painted poem, then I say that in the whole history of Art there has never been a painter more highly gifted than Burne-Jones with the highest qualities of poetic invention."

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I conclude with two extracts from his letters. In one he wrote to me:

“I am without any exception the very worst correspondent that ever lived.” In an earlier one, he refers to an introduction to him which I had received from a common friend, who had given me a letter to him and another to Watts at the same time; and as—when I called at his residence, at Kensington—I had inadvertently sent in the one addressed to Watts, I afterwards asked for its return. He wrote from the Grange: “Here is the introduction to Watts. To say truth it is the one I read when the maid brought me your card, and I thought it was nice of you to feel that it was interchangeable! Don’t forget us in June.”

CHICAGO.

IN closing this course of Scammon Art Lectures in Chicago, I wish to say in a single farewell sentence that it has been a real pleasure to me to revisit your great city after some years of absence from it, and more especially to note the signs of advance which you are making along artistic as well as literary and scientific lines. I hope that some of the thoughts submitted to my audience may be as seeds which will by and by develop and bear fruit. It is the aim of every lecturer, especially a University one, to diffuse as far and wide as he can any of the ideas which he has himself reached, or the con-

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clusions he has come to. In this short course we have been traversing some of the inter-related sections of the three great realms of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good; and I trust that you all feel with our great poet Tennyson that they are

three sisters

That dote upon each other, friends to man,
And never can be sundered without tears.

I trust that none of you have been wearied by my treatment of the problems, and the personalities that have come before us; but that, some of you have been refreshed, and others of you stimulated.

VALE QUI LEGIS







THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM [fragment]

Photograph by F. Hollyer



Photograph by F. Hollyer

VESPERTINA QUIES



Photograph by F. Hollyer

AURORA



THE GOLDEN STAIRS



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